

Rugby Ontario Operations Manual



June 2021

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1.0. Purpose and Administration

1.1 Authority

Authority for the contents of this Manual stems from Section 4.29 of the By-Laws.

1.2 Purpose

To collate and reference all policies and procedures pertaining to the management and administration of Rugby Ontario's matches, programs and services.

1.3 Definitions

- **Appellant** – an individual who initiates an appeal of a decision.
- **Blue Card** – a process initiated on field by a Match Official when a player has been suspected of sustaining a concussion, resulting in the immediate removal of the player from the field of play.
- **Board** – the Board of Directors of Rugby Ontario.
- **CEO** – Chief Executive Officer of Rugby Ontario.
- **Committee** – a Committee established by the Board or CEO.
- **Complainant** – an individual other than a Match Official who reports an incident of alleged misconduct by another person.
- **Director** – an individual elected or appointed to serve on the Rugby Ontario Board.
- **Discipline by Hearing** – the process by which a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer renders a decision based on the evidence presented at a Hearing.
- **Discipline by Review** – the process by which a Judicial Officer renders a disciplinary decision in the absence of a Hearing.
- **Harassment** – Harassment means engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome. It is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and by human rights legislation in Ontario.
- **Judicial Officer** – the individual responsible for handling disciplinary actions. Unless otherwise stated, the individual will be the Rugby Ontario or Branch Union Discipline Director.

- **Junior Player** – is defined as a person who turns between the ages of 12 and 19 years inclusive in that current playing season.
- **League** – A series of matches conducted by either Rugby Ontario or a Branch Union
- **Loan** – a temporary transfer.
- **Match Official** – a referee, assistant referee or other official appointed to a match by the Rugby Ontario Referees Committee or Branch Union Referees Society.
- **Medically Trained Person** – includes doctors of medicine, athletic therapists, physiotherapists, chiropractors and nurses who have completed within the past 12 months the World Rugby Concussion Management for the General Public Certificate
- **Member** – Clubs and Branch Unions under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario.
- **Minor Player** – is defined as a person who is turns 11 years of age or younger in that current playing season.
- **Offender** – a respondent who has been found guilty of misconduct including harassment.
- **Policy** – a statement approved by the Board that clearly and concisely describes the rules and principles to be followed in order to achieve a strategic goal or obligation prescribed in the By-laws.
- **Procedures** – a logical series of steps approved by the CEO that clearly and concisely explain how a policy is to be implemented.
- **Registrant** – an individual registered with a member rugby organization (as defined in Article II of the Rugby Ontario By-laws) and Rugby Canada.
- **Respondent** – an individual who has been named in a Send-Off, Incident or Harassment Report and is required to answer allegations of misconduct.
- **RO** - Rugby Ontario
- **RO Office** – the professional staff located in the Rugby Ontario Office.
- **World Rugby** – formerly the International Rugby Board (IRB).

1.4 Application

The policies and procedures in this Manual apply to all Rugby Ontario directors, officers, employees, Members, registrants, volunteers and spectators in relation to all competitions, events and business conducted under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario.

1.5 Interpretation

1.5.1 Words written in the singular will include the plural and vice-versa.

1.5.2 Unless otherwise specified, the terms ‘reported’, ‘sent’, ‘submitted’, ‘written’ or ‘in writing’ imply e-mail (which is the standard form of communication between the RO Office and the membership). Registered mail may also be used but any transmission delays are the responsibility of the sender.

1.5.3 For clarity, policy statements specifying the responsibilities of registrants and rugby organizations use the term “must”; statements specifying the responsibilities of the RO Office use the term “will”. All procedural steps are mandatory unless they contain the terms “may/should/could”, indicating that they are discretionary.

1.5.4 Unless otherwise specified, response periods will be expressed in consecutive days (i.e. irrespective of weekends and statutory holidays), with the period beginning on the day after a notification has been sent and ending at 17:00 on the last day of the time period. Thus, if a notice was issued on a Monday with a response required within seven (7) days, the time period would expire at 17:00 on the following Monday.

1.5.5 The CEO has the authority to interpret any policy or procedure in this Manual that maybe contradictory, ambiguous or unclear.

1.6 Development and Revision of Policies

1.6.1 Directors, Committee chairs and Members may initiate the development of, or revision to, a policy in this Manual by submitting a [Request for Decision \(RFD\) Form for Program Policy Changes](#) to the CEO.

1.6.2 RFD’s received will be forwarded to the relevant Committee or RO staff for review and action as required.

1.6.3 To be considered, the RFD must be complete in its documentation of (a) the current situation; (b) the rationale for the change; (c) the exact wording of the new or revised policy; and (d) any budget implications.

1.6.4 The new or revised policy will be considered for approval by the Board at a regularly scheduled meeting provided that the RFD is received by the CEO no less than 45 days in advance of that meeting.

1.6.5, The RFD will be published on the Rugby Ontario website 30 days prior to the Board meeting at which it is to be considered so as to give Members an opportunity to comment either directly or, in the case of clubs, through their Branch Union.

1.6.6 For any such comments to be considered, they must be received by the CEO within 10 days of the scheduled Board meeting.

1.7 Development and Revision of Procedures

1.7.1 Committee chairs, Members and the RO Office may initiate the development of, or revision to, a procedure in this Manual by submitting a [Request for Procedure Change \(RFC\) Form](#) to the CEO.

1.7.2 Submissions received from Members will be forwarded to the relevant Committee or within the RO Office for review and action as required.

1.7.3 To be considered, the RFC must be complete in its documentation of (a) the current situation; (b) the rationale for the change; (c) the exact wording of the new or revised procedure; and (d) any alternative steps.

1.7.4 All proposed procedural changes, including supporting forms and other documents referenced in the text, require approval by the CEO before taking effect.

1.7.5 The CEO's decision on a RFC will be communicated to all interested parties within 15 days.

1.8 Manual Upkeep

1.8.1 To ensure that the Manual remains current, an annual review of its contents will be coordinated by the CEO.

1.8.2 Changes will be communicated to Members via email to their President and for all other interested parties via the Rugby Ontario website.

2.0 Membership, Registration, Transfers & Tour Sanctioning

2.1 New Members

Policy:

2.1.1 To be considered for membership, clubs and other organized rugby groups must meet the admission requirements specified in section 2.2 of the By-Laws.

2.1.2 Applications will be considered by the Board at the next scheduled Board meeting, provided that they are complete.

Procedures:

2.1.3 Applicants must submit a written application to the RO Office addressing the admission requirements using the [New Club Membership Application Form.](#)

2.1.4 The applicant will receive an approval or a request for any additional information required to fully complete the application.

2.2 Annual Membership Renewal

Policy:

2.2.1 Clubs and other rugby organizations which have been accepted as Members must re-apply for Membership annually.

2.2.2 Renewal applications received in the RO Office after the specified deadline will be returned and the rugby organization must apply as a new member.

Procedures:

2.2.3 Submission of a completed Club Membership Renewal Application to the RO Office by no later than the date specified by the RO Office.

2.2.4 The applicant will receive an approval or a request for any additional information required to fully complete the application.

2.3 Registration of Participants

Policy:

2.3.1 An individual must [register with Rugby Ontario/Rugby Canada](#) in one or more of the specified categories and player sub-categories indicated in 2.3.9 and in accordance with specified procedures prior to participating in any rugby program under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario/Rugby Canada.

2.3.2 Individuals are registered only after their registration and any required payment has been validated in [Rugby Canada's registration system](#).

2.3.3 As per Section 1.4, all registrants must abide by all the Policies and Procedures indicated in this Manual.

2.3.4 All registrants must abide by the [Rugby Ontario Registrants Code of Conduct](#) and the specific Code of Conduct below relevant to their registration category

- (i) [Athlete](#)
- (ii) [Coach or Manager](#)
- (iii) [Match Official](#)

2.3.5 An individual must not be a registered with more than one Member at any given time.

2.3.6 Non-compliance with any policies or procedures will result in penalties being applied to the individual and Member involved - refer to *Schedule of Sanctions*, in Appendix A.

2.3.7 A refund for any Rugby Canada or Rugby Ontario registration fees will be granted in accordance with the [Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario Refund Policy](#).

2.3.8 An individual deemed to be not in good standing from a previous registration period (refer 2.3.13) is ineligible to register for the current registration period.

Procedures:

2.3.9 Further to Policy 2.3.1, the specified categories and player sub-categories are:

- (i) **Categories (8):** Player, Coach, Match Official, Board Member, Medical Staff, Volunteer, Team Manager/Administrator, Social.
- (ii) **Player Sub-categories (10):** Senior, Junior, Junior (Intro to contact), Minor (Touch or Flag), Minor (Intro to contact), Temporary, 48 hour, Masters, Non-contact (Touch or Flag), University/Collegiate.

2.3.10 Evidence of medical insurance is required for non-Canadian citizens. The registrant must provide such evidence to their Member upon registration.

2.3.11 Upon request, copies of birth certificates, passports or other evidence acceptable to Rugby Ontario as proof of age or citizenship must accompany all registrations. The burden of proof of age or citizenship rests with the registrant.

2.3.12 Individuals must not register through Rugby Canada's registration system for the upcoming season before a date specified by Rugby Canada.

2.3.13 Unless otherwise specified, an individual's registration is effective from the date that the registration becomes valid until the April 30th of the following year.

2.3.14 Applications for a refund of registration fees must be undertaken through the individual's registrant account.

2.3.15 Each Member shall annually, in accordance with directions from the RO office, provide a list of any registrants not in good standing.

2.4 Transfers & Loans

Policy:

2.4.1 Unless on loan, a player or coach who is registered with a Member under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario must not join or participate in the playing or technical activities of another Member in Canada during the current registration period without the written permission of both the Member and the RO Office.

2.4.2 A player seeking a transfer to or from another National Union must do so in accordance with World Rugby regulations, which requires the written approval of that National Union and Rugby Canada.

2.4.3 Unless on loan, any player who transfers from a Member is ineligible to participate in the playing or technical activities of that Member again for a minimum of 60 days after the transfer has been approved.

2.4.4 A transfer request will only be approved by Rugby Ontario if the Member confirms that the registrant is in good standing. A Member may only deny a transfer request if the registrant is not in good standing or if a written agreement exists between the Member and the registrant in addition to the Rugby Canada registration system. If the Member does not respond within seven (7) days of receiving the request, it will be automatically approved by Rugby Ontario.

2.4.5 A registrant will be permitted to play for another Member in a Province other than Ontario **on loan** provided they follow the requirements indicated in Procedure 2.4.12.

2.4.6 An individual registered with a Member in another Province will be permitted to play for an Ontario Member **on loan** provided that approval is given by both Rugby Ontario and the registrant's Provincial rugby union and they follow the requirements indicated in Procedure 2.4.13.

2.4.7 A registrant will be permitted to play for another Member in Ontario **on loan** subject to the requirements indicated in Procedure 2.4.13.

2.4.8 Non-compliance with the above policies will result in penalties being applied to the individual and Member involved - refer to *Schedule of Sanctions*, in Appendix A.

2.4.9 Notwithstanding the policy in 2.3.5 and 2.4.1, a registrant of one Member may, without the need for a loan or transfer, participate in Under 12, Under 14, recreational non-contact rugby activities or Masters matches for another Member.

2.4.10 (i) Notwithstanding the policy in 2.3.5 and 2.4.1, a registrant of one Member may, without the need for a loan or transfer, participate with another Member in a division of a 7s Tournament if the Member with whom they are registered is not participating in that division or in a conflicting competition on that day.

(ii) In all instances in 2.4.10 (i) above, the Member with whom the player is registered must be notified in writing by the Member with whom the player is not registered of the intention of the player to participate in the relevant 7s tournament. Such notification must be provided no later than 7 days prior to the commencement of the 7s tournament.

Procedures:

2.4.11 For international transfers, the transferring player must submit a completed [World Rugby Clearance form](#) to their Member club for confirmation that the player is in good standing with the Member and submission to the RO Office. The RO Office will initiate the *Declaration of Current Union* section of this form and submit to Rugby Canada for further processing in accordance with its established procedures. The Clearance does not take effect until the player's registration has been inactivated in Rugby Canada's registration system.

2.4.12 For inter-provincial transfers, the requesting Member initiates the process using Rugby Canada's registration system to notify the home Member's President, the Branch Union President and RO Office that a transfer has been requested.

2.4.13 A registrant will be permitted to play for another Member in a Province other than Ontario **on loan** provided that:

- (i) That Province's Rugby Union gives its approval to Rugby Ontario.
- (ii) The receiving Member does not participate in a League/Cup that includes Ontario based clubs.
- (iii) The registrant receives written approval from both their Rugby Ontario Member and the Member of destination
- (iv) The registrant is in good standing with their Rugby Ontario Member, Rugby Ontario and Rugby Canada
- (v) The registrant pays any fees or dues required by the Province and Member of destination
- (vi) The period of the loan does not exceed 30 days

2.4.14 A registrant will be permitted to play for a Member in Ontario **on loan** provided that:

- (i) The registrant cannot participate in a League/Cup/Competition in which both the Member of destination and the Member of origin participate
- (ii) The registrant receives written approval from both Members
- (iii) The registrant is in good standing with their Member of origin, Rugby Ontario & Rugby Canada
- (iv) The registrant pays any fees or dues required by the Member of destination
- (v) Players on loan are not permitted to play in RO Senior League or Cup 1st teams, (i.e. Marshall, OWL, McCormick Cup, Intermediate Cup, Fall Cup, Gee Gage Cup) or Junior Provincial Championships.
- (vi) Where the Member participates in a league under the jurisdiction of another Province, approval is received from that Province
- (vii) Branch Unions may apply on an annual basis to Rugby Ontario for an exception to this policy for a match(s) under their jurisdiction.
- (viii) The period of the loan does not exceed 30 days
- (ix) The loan is submitted using the [Rugby Ontario Player Loan Application Form](#)
- (x) The loan may be terminated at any time by the mutual written agreement of the registrant, Member of origin and Member of destination.

2.4.15 Any request for a transfer or loan must be submitted to the Rugby Ontario office a minimum of 7 days prior to when the player wishes to participate in any rugby related activities with the Member of destination.

2.5 Tour Sanctioning

Outgoing Tours

Policy:

2.5.1 Any tour outside of Canada must be sanctioned by Rugby Ontario and Rugby Canada.

Procedures:

2.5.2 Any Member seeking to undertake a tour outside of Canada must complete the [Rugby Canada Tour Sanctioning process](#). The application must include details of liability insurance, out-of-country medical insurance coverage, together with payment of any Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario administration fees.

2.5.3 The completed submission must be received within the timelines indicated otherwise a late submission penalty will may be applied - refer to *Schedule of Sanctions* in Appendix A.

Incoming Tours

Policy:

2.5.4 Any incoming tour to Ontario must be sanctioned by Rugby Ontario and Rugby Canada.

Procedures:

2.5.5 Any school/club seeking to undertake a tour into Ontario must complete [Rugby Canada Tour Sanctioning Process](#). The application must include the full roster of all those traveling, details of liability insurance, out-of-country medical insurance coverage, together with payment of any Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario administration fees.

2.5.6 The completed submission must be received within the timelines indicated otherwise a late submission penalty will be applied - refer *Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines* in Appendix A.

3.0 Risk Management

Risk Management Framework

Rugby Ontario's Risk Management Policy is to:

- (i) use best practices in risk management to support and enhance activities in all program areas;
- (ii) ensure that risk management is an integral part of its decision-making process;
- (iii) use a structured risk management framework to minimize reasonably foreseeable physical, financial or legal harm to people, disruption to operations and damage to the environment and property;
- (iv) identify and take advantage of opportunities to minimize adverse effects;
- (v) train its administrators, staff, committee members and representative team managers to implement risk management effectively;
- (vi) continually improve its risk management practices.

3.1 Serious Injury Reporting

Policy:

3.1.1 Any serious injury, including suspected head, neck or spinal cord injury, including a suspected concussion, that occurs in a sanctioned match or training session and requires the athlete to cease participation in that event must be reported to Rugby Ontario.

Procedures:

3.1.2 To report an injury as identified in 3.1.1, the [Serious Injury Notification Report](#) must be submitted to the RO Office within two (2) days of the incident's occurrence, otherwise a late submission penalty may be applied - refer to *Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines* in Appendix A.

3.1.3 The report will be referred to Rugby Canada and if determined necessary to the Risk Management Committee to determine if any follow-up is required using Board-established risk referral procedures.

3.1.4 If a player is removed from the field of play for a suspected concussion in any sanctioned rugby activities, the [Rugby Ontario Blue Card](#) process shall be initiated.

3.2 Emergency Action Plans

Policy:

3.2.1 As a condition of membership, each Member must have an up to date Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that has been approved by its Executive and in the possession of a designated member of its Executive.

3.2.2 For any match under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario, details of the EAP must be given by the home team or hosting organization, **on request**, to the visiting team and match official.

Procedures:

3.2.3 The format of the EAP should be compatible with the [Rugby Ontario EAP Minimum Requirements](#).

3.2.4 Wherever possible, the EAP should be posted at each facility used by the Member and must be posted on its website.

3.2.5 If a requested EAP is found to be either unavailable or incomplete, the matter should be referred to the RO Office for follow-up and possible compliance action - refer to *Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines* in Appendix A.

3.3 Concussion Management & Return to Play

Policy:

3.3.1 All matches played under Rugby Ontario's jurisdiction must comply with [World Rugby Concussion Guidelines](#).

3.3.2. All registered coaches, managers, match officials and players, and their legal guardian if under the age of 18, are required at the point of registration to undertake all Ontario Ministry and Rugby Ontario requirements in relation to [Rowan's Law](#) and the [Blue Card](#) program for managing the removal-from-sport and return-to-sport procedures as outlined in 3.3.5.

3.3.3 Suspected incidents of non-compliance with the above policy must be referred to the RO Office for follow-up and possible compliance action by the Discipline Committee - refer to: *Schedule of Sanctions* in Appendix A.

3.3.4 In accordance with the requirements set out in Rowan's Law and its [associated regulation](#), every sport organization (including Members) is required to identify a **designated person(s)** as having specific responsibilities under the removal-from-sport and return-to-sport protocols – refer to the [Rugby Ontario Blue Card program](#). The responsibilities for the designated person(s) may be shared between one or more individuals.

Procedures:

3.3.4 All players, coaches, parents, match officials, administrators, medical practitioners and other rugby stakeholders are strongly recommended to educate themselves on the above – referenced [World Rugby Concussion Guidelines](#) and, in particular, the *Graduated Return to Play Program*.

3.3.5 The Rugby Ontario Blue Card Concussion Initiative is applicable in all matches under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario. The protocols and implementation procedures are available at rugbyontario.com/bluecard.

3.4 Critical Incident Protocol

Policy:

3.4.1 All Provincial and Member teams must follow the [Rugby Ontario Critical Incident Protocol](#).

3.4.2 Suspected incidents of non-compliance with the above policy must be referred to the RO Office for follow-up and possible compliance action by the Discipline & Appeals Committee - refer to: *Schedule of Sanctions* in Appendix A.

Procedures:

3.4.3 The protocol will be included in the Management Handbook for each Provincial representative team and must be included in the equivalent documentation for Branch Union representative teams.

3.5 Sanctioning, Insurance Coverage and Claims

Policy:

3.5.1 Rugby Ontario through the Rugby Canada Insurance program will provide the following minimum insurance coverage to cover all registrants while they participate in sanctioned rugby activities:

- (i) Sport accident insurance
- (ii) Sport liability insurance
- (iii) Directors & Officers insurance
- (iv) International Travel coverage

3.5.2 It is the responsibility of each Member to ensure that all matches, training sessions, tours and other events are sanctioned before they take place;

3.5.3 It is the responsibility of each Member to ensure that all their players and other participants including Directors and Officers are properly registered.

3.5.4 It is responsibility of each Member to ensure any necessary Certificates of Insurance are obtained prior to commencing any rugby related activities.

3.5.5 Rugby Ontario will ensure that all relevant information on insurance coverage and claims is made available to its Members on a timely basis.

3.5.6 In order for an event, match or training conducted by a Member to be insured, it must receive sanctioning from Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario.

Procedures:

3.5.7. The following matches between Members, where conducted within Ontario, shall be considered to be automatically sanctioned, provided all participants are currently registered in the Rugby Canada National Registration system;

(i) a match conducted as part of an approved League under the auspices of Rugby Ontario or a Branch Union.

3.5.8. A training session of a Member, where conducted within Ontario, shall be considered to be automatically sanctioned where all participants are currently registered in the Rugby Canada National Registration system.

3.5.9 For all matches, trainings, tournaments, tours or events other than those covered by 3.5.7 and 3.5.8, a Member must apply for sanctioning following the Rugby Canada Sanctioning *Process*, including the payment of any required fees.

3.5.10 For Tournaments, the host Member must submit a [Rugby Canada Tournament Sanctioning Application Form](#) to Rugby Ontario not less than 30 days in advance of the scheduled date. Permission may be withheld by Rugby Ontario if the proposed date clashes with a scheduled Rugby Ontario match or other special event.

3.5.11 Rosters of all participating teams must be submitted to the RO Office either pre-tournament (if available) or not later than seven (7) days post-tournament, for onward transmittal to Rugby Canada.

3.5.12 For singular matches (e.g. an exhibition/non-League/Masters match), the host Member must submit a [Rugby Canada Exhibition Match Sanctioning Form](#) not less than two (2) weeks in advance of the scheduled date. Permission may be withheld if the event does not comply with all relevant World Rugby, Rugby Canada and Rugby Ontario requirements.

Insurance Certificates

3.5.13 To obtain an Insurance Certificate, a member must submit the [Rugby Canada Request for Certificate of Insurance Form](#).

Obtaining additional coverage:

3.5.14 Members wishing to purchase additional insurance coverage for their registrants not provided by Rugby Ontario may do so through [Rugby Canada's Optional Individual Top-Up Insurance](#) and submit directly to Rugby Canada.

Making a claim:

3.5.15 To make a claim, registrants or their representative should **immediately** inform Rugby Canada and the insurance broker that an incident has occurred and a claim will be submitted. Contact details can be found [here](#).

3.5.16 In the case of a claim for Sport Accident Insurance, the [Rugby Canada Injury Report Form](#) must be completed and submitted directly to Rugby Canada within 90 days of the injury occurrence.

3.5.17 In the case of a claim for Sport Accident Insurance, wherever possible, the [Rugby Canada Witness Report Form](#) must be completed and submitted directly to Rugby Canada within 90 days of the injury occurrence.

Clarifying Procedures:

3.5.18 Any queries or concerns about the above procedures may be submitted to the RO Office.

3.6 Medical Personnel and Equipment

Policy:

3.6.1 Prior to the start of a match played under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario, both the home and away teams must have present a person who has completed within the past 12 months the [World Rugby Concussion Management for the General Public Certificate](#) and [First Aid In Rugby Certificate](#). Both teams must identify this person to the other team and the match officials. The names of these people shall be recorded as the designated medical personal on the Rugby Ontario Game Sheet.

3.6.2 Each team must have a first aid kit at each match. This first aid kit, as a minimum, should include contents equivalent to the [Canadian Red Cross Deluxe First Aid Kit](#).

3.6.3 For all Provincial Team matches and multi-team tournaments, festivals and Championship finals administered by Rugby Ontario, the hosting organization must:

- (i) provide a designated medical area with adequate lighting;
- (ii) arrange for the presence of a medically trained person, familiar with contact sports injuries.

3.6.4 For all Provincial Team matches, not administered by Rugby Ontario, Rugby Ontario shall ensure that a medically training person is present at the match.

3.6.5 Suspected incidents of non-compliance with the policies in paragraphs 3.6.1-2 must be referred to the RO Office for follow-up and possible compliance action by the Discipline Committee - refer to *Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines* in Appendix A.

Procedures:

3.6.6 For all matches and events identified in 3.6.3 above, Rugby Ontario strongly recommends that the hosting organization has a wide range of medical equipment available including portable resuscitation devices and others listed on the Tournament Medical Facilities section of the [World Rugby's Player Welfare website](#).

3.6.7 All Medical Personnel are expected to be educated on the Ontario Ministry and Rugby Ontario Rowan's Law requirements, including the Blue Card program for managing incidents involving a player that has been suspected of sustaining a concussion.

3.7 Playing Surface and Weather Conditions

Policy:

3.7.1 The home team or host organization must ensure that the playing surface for all matches sanctioned by Rugby Ontario adheres to the requirements of [World Rugby Laws relating to the Ground](#).

3.7.2 Lines must not be marked with quicklime or slaked lime.

3.7.3 The appointed match official has the authority to suspend, restart or abandon a match in the event of a non-conforming playing surface or existence of adverse weather conditions.

3.7.4 Further to 3.7.3, in the event of a non-conforming playing surface or existence of adverse weather conditions:

- (i) if both teams do not wish to continue, the match official must abandon the match and report the matter on the Rugby Ontario Game Sheet. The result shall be determined based on Policy 5.1.14.
- (ii) if one team does not wish to continue, the match official must abandon the match and report the matter on the Rugby Ontario Game Sheet. The final result of the match (default, abandon, replay) will be determined by the appropriate review panel of the governing body who has the jurisdiction of the match. (e.g. Rugby Ontario, or a Branch Union)

3.7.5 Incidents of non-compliance with the above policies must be reported on the [Rugby Ontario Game Sheet](#).

Procedures:

3.7.6 A match must be immediately suspended by the match official if extreme weather conditions (e.g. lightning, tornado, hail, heat) exist. [Rugby Canada Guidelines for Addressing Thunderstorms & Visible Lightning](#) must be followed.

3.7.7 In determining when to suspend and restart a match due to extreme heat, the match official must follow the [World Rugby's Heat Guidelines](#).

3.7.8 A match will only be resumed when, in the opinion of the match official, the weather giving rise to these conditions has passed. If it is not possible to resume within one (1) hour of the suspension, the match official must abandon the match.

3.8 Players' Equipment

Policy:

3.8.1 Players' equipment must conform to [World Rugby Laws relating to Players' Clothing](#).

3.8.2 If the facility limits the footwear allowed to be worn, (but still complies with World Rugby Law) the home team must notify the visiting team and match officials a minimum of four (4) days prior to the competition.

3.8.3 All players participating in contact rugby must wear mouth-guards. For all other players, the wearing of mouth-guards is a strongly recommended safety practice.

Procedures:

3.8.4 For additional details of permissible and non-permissible equipment, [World Rugby Regulation relating to Provisions Related to Players' Dress](#) should be consulted.

3.8.5 Requests for clarification should be submitted to the RO Office.

3.9 Under-19 Law Variations

Policy:

3.9.1 The [World Rugby Under-19 Variations](#) and [Rugby Ontario Age Grade Variations](#) apply to every age-grade match Under 19 and below, under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario.

3.9.2 Additional safety variations may be considered for lower age-grade matches.

Procedures:

3.9.3 Proposals for additional safety variations must be submitted to the RO Office using a [Request for Decision \(RFD\) Form for Program Policy Changes](#).

3.10 Junior Player Eligibility to Participate in Different Age Categories

Risk Statement:

It is important that all people involved in a decision to permit a junior player to participate in a different age category fully understand that rugby is a contact sport and like all contact sports, players are exposed to the risk of injury. This risk could be heightened by allowing players to participate in matches organized for a different age category if their physical development, skill level, maturity and experience differ from that of the players he/she will play with or against.

Policy:

3.10.1 To be eligible for senior contact rugby, players must be at least turning 18 years of age during the calendar year. For players who are turning 17 years of age or turning 18 years of age and requesting to play in a front row position during the calendar year, to be eligible, they must comply with the procedures set out below and receive approval from Rugby Ontario.

3.10.2 To be eligible for higher age-grade contact rugby, players will be permitted to participate in an age-grade match that is not more than two (2) years above their age on January 1st of the year in which the match is held (referred to as the 'two-year window'), provided that they comply with the procedures set out below and receive approval from Rugby Ontario. For example, the two-year window applies to a player who is eligible for Under-16 match but wants to participate in an Under-18 match.

3.10.3 To be eligible for lower age-grade contact rugby, players will be permitted to participate in an age-grade match that is no more than one (1) year below his or her age on January 1st of the year in which the match is held (referred to as the 'one-year window'), provided that they comply with the procedures set out below and receive approval from Rugby Ontario. Players who currently play or have previously played rugby at University level or participated in National or Rugby Ontario High Performance age grade programs are not eligible to play lower age-grade contact club rugby.

3.10.4 In exceptional circumstances, playing up or down requests will be considered outside the designated age groups, taking into consideration the weight, height and experience level of the player, as well as the welfare of other players in that age group.

3.10.5 Each application must include a signed assessment by a qualified coach; a signed confirmation by the player's parent or legal guardian; and a signed medical clearance by a physician or sports medicine specialist.

3.10.6 Applicants must not participate in matches outside their age category until written notification of approval has been received.

3.10.7 An approved application will only be valid for the year in which the application is made.

Procedures:

3.10.8 The [Application for a Junior Player to Participate in a Different Age Category Form](#) must be completed and submitted to the RO Office a minimum of 7 days prior to when the player wishes to participate in any rugby related activities in the requested different age category.

3.10.9 Applicants will receive written notification from the RO office of whether their application has been approved or rejected.

3.11 Player Eligibility to Participate in A Different Gender Category

Risk Statement:

It is important that all people involved in a decision to permit a player to participate in a different gender category, which may also involve a different age category, fully understand that rugby is a contact sport and, like all contact sports, players are exposed to the risk of injury. This risk should not be heightened by allowing players to participate in matches organized for a different gender and age without taking under careful consideration the differences in physical and mental development of males and females at their different stages of progression.

Policy:

3.11.1 In keeping with the [World Rugby Mixed Gender Rugby Guideline](#) and where Rugby Ontario age grade match structures operate in odd age groups, best practice is for participation in mixed gender contact rugby teams to occur only until the end of the season in which a player turns 12 years of age.

3.11.2 A player over 12 but under 15 years of age may play in a different gender category of contact rugby where no other option in continuing to play contact rugby exists, provided that the player complies with:

- (i) the policies in 3.10.2/3 governing participation in a higher age-grade competition (i.e. the two-year window) or a lower age-grade competition (i.e. the one-year window);
- (ii) the procedures set out below and receives approval from Rugby Ontario.

3.11.3 Each application must include a signed assessment by a qualified coach; a signed confirmation by the player's parent or legal guardian; and a signed medical clearance by a physician or sports medicine specialist.

3.11.4 In exceptional circumstances, a request to play contact rugby in a different gender category will be considered outside the categories indicated in 3.11.1 and 3.11.2, taking into consideration the height, weight and experience level of the player, as well as the welfare of other players in that category.

3.11.5 An applicant must not participate in a different gender category until written notification of approval has been received.

3.11.6 An approved application will only be valid for the year in which the application is made.

3.11.7 There are no age restrictions on mixed gender teams in non-contact, recreational rugby.

Procedures:

3.11.8 The [Application for a Junior Player to Participate in a Different Gender Category Form](#) must be completed and submitted to the RO Office a minimum of 7 days prior to when the player wishes to participate in the requested different gender rugby related activities.

3.11.9 Applicants will receive written notification from the RO office of whether their application has been approved or rejected.

3.12 Provision of Medical Information

Policy:

3.12.1 Players must inform the rugby organization for which they are playing (i.e. Club/Branch Union/RO) of any medical condition which may put them at risk during the course of a match. The relevant rugby organization must ensure that their players are aware of this requirement.

Procedures:

3.12.2 The required information should be submitted on the [Rugby Ontario Athlete Medical Information Form](#).

3.13 Harassment (please also refer to Sections 7.8, 8.6 and 9.2)

Risk Statement:

Further to the definition of Harassment in Policy 1.3:

- (i) In its more extreme forms, and in particular sexual harassment, harassment can be an offence under Canada's Criminal Code;
- (ii) Any person who experiences harassment continues to have the right to seek assistance from the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) even when steps are being taken under Rugby Ontario's policy;
- (iii) Every Member and registrant has a responsibility to play a part in ensuring that Rugby Ontario's sport environment is free from harassment;
- (iv) There are many types of harassment including:
 - comments, actions or gestures which are insulting, intimidating, humiliating, malicious, degrading or offensive;
 - actions that disturb persistently, torment, bother continually, persecute or trouble by repeated attacks and hostilities;
 - unwelcome advances (e.g. for sexual favours) or other physical conduct (e.g. sexual touching) when submitting to or rejecting this conduct is used as the basis for making decisions which affect the individual;
 - when such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's performance; creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; or ought to be reasonably known to be unwelcome.

Policy:

3.13.1 Rugby Ontario is committed to providing an environment free of harassment on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability.

Application

3.13.2 All Members of Rugby Ontario shall formally adopt this Harassment policy.

3.13.3 Any registrant who has encountered any form of harassment may file a formal written complaint to the RO office.

3.13.4 This policy applies to incidents which occur between individuals associated with Rugby Ontario during the course of Rugby Ontario activities.

3.13.5 This policy does not apply to:

- (i) Incidents in the workplace, which are covered in Rugby Ontario's Human Resources Policy and Procedures;
- (ii) Incidents involving individuals in clubs, Branch Unions and rugby facilities who receive remuneration as defined by the Income Tax Act. The organizations which hire them are responsible for maintaining a harassment-free environment in accordance with the Employment Standards Act and OHRC regulations;
- (iii) Incidents on and off the field of play which are covered in sections 7.4-7.6.

3.13.6 Retaliation against an individual or associate of an individual who filed a complaint or participated in any procedure under this policy will be treated as harassment and eligible for the filing of a further complaint.

3.13.7 A minimum of two (2) Provincial Harassment Officers (PHOs), one male and one female, will be appointed by the Rugby Ontario CEO to investigate harassment incidents and complaints involving Rugby Ontario registrants. They are to be provided with the necessary resources and support.

3.13.8 Information related to the complaint will not be disclosed by any party, unless such disclosure is required by a disciplinary or other remedial process.

Procedures:

3.13.9 Any individual who experiences harassment should, if possible, make it known to the harasser that the behavior is unwelcome, offensive and contrary to Rugby Ontario's policy. If this is not possible or, after confronting the harasser, the harassment continues, the individual should seek the confidential advice of a PHO through the Rugby Ontario CEO.

3.13.10 The [Rugby Ontario Unruly Individual Procedure](#) may be used in a situation by an individual or their Member is a situation where an individual is experiencing harassment.

3.13.11 If the individual or Member decides to file a harassment complaint, it must be lodged with Rugby Ontario using the [Rugby Ontario Harassment Complaint Incident Form](#) within 30 days of the incident unless there are exceptional circumstances. The RO Office will forward the complaint to the appropriate PHO for investigation and follow-up as appropriate.

3.13.12 For a complaint to be handled impartially after it has been filed, the parties involved must respect and adhere to the confidential nature of the proceedings. All written and

verbal communications must be restricted to those directly involved in the complaint. Failure to do so may result in further action being taken by Rugby Ontario.

3.13.13 After receiving a complaint, the PHO will as soon as practicable contact both the complainant and the harasser to indicate who will be handling the complaint and that follow-up action is underway.

3.13.14 The steps in handling a complaint are detailed in Section 7.8.

3.13.15 During the investigation of a complaint, if the PHO determines that the Police should be notified or becomes aware that it has already been reported to the Police, the investigation will cease until such time that it does not interfere with any investigation by the Police.

3.13.16 Rugby Ontario has the right to suspend from all rugby-related activities any registrant who has been charged with a criminal offence.

3.13.17 If the CEO is unable to find suitably qualified candidates, the issue is to be brought to the Board for priority attention.

3.14 Child Protection (Please also refer to Section 7.9)

Risk statement:

- (i) In Ontario, under the [*Child and Family Services Act*](#), **everyone** has a legal duty to report if there are reasonable grounds to suspect actual (or risk of) abuse or neglect of a child.
- (ii) Rugby Ontario is committed to providing all participants with a safe and welcoming environment in which to participate in the sport of rugby.
- (iii) In meeting this commitment, Rugby Ontario recognizes that any incident of child abuse is extremely serious and very sensitive. Accordingly, Rugby Ontario has developed the [*Guide to Protecting Children Playing Rugby in Ontario*](#). The document complements Rugby Ontario's policy and procedures by describing:
 - the multi-faceted characteristics of child abuse and how it may occur in rugby;
 - the procedures to be followed when an incident report is received by Rugby Ontario

Policy:

3.14.1 Rugby Ontario defines a child as a person under 18 years of age.

3.14.2 This policy applies to any individual, whether in a paid or unpaid/ voluntary capacity, who interacts with children in rugby events and activities under the jurisdiction of Rugby

Ontario. In addition to registrants and employees, this includes parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors (to the fullest extent possible).

3.14.3 Rugby Ontario will take reasonable measures to ensure that:

- (i) children are safe and protected from any form of harm, abuse, harassment, bullying or exploitation;
- (ii) procedures are in place for identifying, recording, reporting, addressing and resolving concerns, allegations or complaints brought to its attention;
- (iii) all concerns, allegations and complaints of any form of abuse, harassment, bullying and improper conduct or poor practices by adults are dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially.

3.14.4 Rugby Ontario and its Members must:

- (i) support and provide current information to those involved in rugby on child abuse and other child protection issues;
- (ii) have suitable measures in place to ensure that all volunteers and others not registered with Rugby Canada are suitable for working with junior players.

3.14.5 The Rugby Ontario CEO will appoint a Provincial Child Protection Officer (PCPO) who will be responsible for the planning, development, implementation, application and review of this policy under the direction of the Board and its CEO.

3.14.6 Any Member with junior and/or minor players (as defined in Section 1.3) registered must appoint a Child Protection Officer (CPO).

3.14.7 All individuals working or volunteering with children in a rugby environment under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario must:

- (i) ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy;
- (ii) observe appropriate conduct, procedures and best practices at all times;
- (iii) report incidents or suspected cases including a sexual relationship between a team official and an athlete to the Children's Aid Society or Police Services Office immediately and then inform the PCPO or their CPO.

3.14.8 All CPOs and team officials whose role places them in a position of authority or involves regular supervisory contact with junior and /or minor players must complete and submit a copy of an approved police records check for vulnerable sector screening to their Member.

3.14.9 Any screening completed as per 3.14.8, shall be valid for a period of three (3) years, after which it must be recompleted.

3.14.10 Any person who has not completed an approved police record check for vulnerable sector screening shall not fulfill a role that places them in a position of authority or involves any regular supervisory contact with junior players.

3.14.11 Any registrant, if charged with a criminal offence, must notify both their Club President and the Rugby Ontario CEO in writing within 48 hours of the details of this charge.

3.14.12 The Club President and Rugby Ontario CEO shall not disclose any information from;
(i) any such notification as indicated in 3.14.11 above; or
(ii) any information contained in a Police Record Check received;
unless it is relevant to an assault or a vulnerable sector person.

3.14.13 Any person who returns a positive result for a charge that is relevant to a sexual assault, vulnerable sector person or child protection issue shall not be permitted to fulfill a role that places them in a position of authority or involves any supervisory contact with junior players.

3.14.14 Any person who returns a positive result for a charge other than a charge that is relevant to a sexual assault, vulnerable sector person or child protection issue may fulfill a role that places them in a position of authority or involves any supervisory contact with junior and/or minor players with the written approval of both the Member and Rugby Ontario.

3.14.15 A Member, upon request from the Rugby Ontario office, must submit within 7 days, copies of all police record checks for vulnerable sector screening held for their current registrants. Failure to do so, may result in the Member being sanctioned in accordance with Appendix A- Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines.

Procedures:

3.14.16 Any incident must immediately be reported using the [Rugby Ontario Child Protection Incident Report Form](#) and submitted to the RO Office which will forward the report to the PCPO for investigation and follow-up.

3.14.17 The [Rugby Ontario Unruly Individual Procedure](#) may be used in a situation by an individual or a Member involving child protection.

3.14.18 The steps in handling a complaint are detailed in Section 7.9.

3.14.19 Any Member running age-grade programs must advise Rugby Ontario of their appointed CPO as part of their Annual Club Membership Renewal Application or New Club Membership Application.

3.15 Anti-Doping

Overarching Statement

Anti-doping programs seek to preserve what is intrinsically valuable about sport. This intrinsic value is often referred to as the “the spirit of sport” and in rugby incorporates the pursuit of excellence through the dedicated efforts of each individual following World Rugby’s five values of passion, integrity, discipline, respect and team work. Doping is fundamentally contrary to the spirit of sport and the values of rugby. Rugby Ontario is fully supportive of both Rugby Canada’s and World Rugby’s commitment to anti-doping, providing an environment of fair play and transparency.

Policy:

3.15.1 All registrants must abide by the Rugby Ontario Anti-Doping Policy.

3.15.2 Rugby Ontario abides by [World Rugby Anti-Doping Policies](#). World Rugby Regulation 21 (Anti-Doping) can be found [here](#).

3.16 Privacy

Policy:

3.16.1 – All registrants must abide by the [Rugby Ontario Privacy Policy](#).

3.17 Social Media

Policy:

3.17.1 – All registrants must abide by the [Rugby Ontario Social Media Policy](#).

3.18 Accessibility

Overarching Statement

Providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities

Rugby Ontario is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

Rugby Ontario understands that obligations under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its

obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Rugby Ontario is committed to complying with both the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#) and the AODA. Rugby Ontario is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Policy:

3.18.1 – All registrants must abide by the [Rugby Ontario Accessibility Policy](#).

3.19 Inclusion

Policy:

Sport plays a major role in promoting the inclusion of all groups in society. Rugby Ontario is committed to inclusive and available sport to all Ontarians.

Rugby Ontario is committed to the achievement of sport equity and equal opportunity, including the establishment and maintenance of an organizational and sport environment where by all registrants have the opportunity to contribute to the sport to their maximum potential.

Rugby Ontario is committed to the principle and practice of fair and equitable allocation of resources and opportunities and to encourage participation by all Ontarians regardless of race, and ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex (gender), sexual orientation, sexual identification, disability, age, marital status or family status.

Rugby Ontario will work to ensure that inclusion and sport equity are key considerations when developing, updating or delivering policies, governance, programs, projects and services.

3.20 Trans Inclusion

Rugby Ontario adopts the [Rugby Canada Trans Inclusion Policy](#).

4.0 Technical

4.1 Coaches & Managers

Policy:

4.1.1 Further to policy 2.3.1, all coaches must be registered as a coach and all managers must be registered as a manager through the [Rugby Canada National Registration system](#).

4.1.2 The registered coach of each team participating in a match under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario must have the required coach certification/training specified for that match as indicated in the Procedures of this section 4.1.

4.1.3 All registered coaches and managers must abide by the [Rugby Ontario Coaches and Managers Code of Conduct](#).

Procedures:

4.1.4 In accordance with Rugby Canada's Play Smart Player Welfare Program, all registered coaches of all teams must have completed within the previous calendar year prior to coaching:

- (i) World Rugby's ["Rugby Ready"](#) and
- (ii) World Rugby's ["Concussion Management for the General Public"](#)
- (iii) Ontario Ministry and Rugby Ontario Rowan's Law requirements

4.1.5 Each Under-8 to Under-10 age grade team must have, as a minimum, one registered coach with trained status in *NCCP Community Initiation/World Rugby Level 1* or an equivalent qualification. Where a club participates in the Rugby Canada Rookie Rugby program, ideally all coaches shall have undertaken the Rugby Canada Rookie Rugby coach training program.

4.1.6 All registered coaches of Under-12 to Under-18 age grade teams and senior teams other than those indicated in 4.1.7 and 4.1.8 must have, as a minimum, trained status in *NCCP Community Initiation/World Rugby Level 1* or an equivalent qualification.

4.1.7 All registered coaches of 1st teams in the Marshall Premiership, Marshall Championship and Ontario Women's League (OWL) must have, as a minimum, trained status in *NCCP Competition Introduction/World Rugby Level 2* or an equivalent qualification.

4.1.8 All registered head coaches of all Rugby Ontario's Provincial programs must have as a minimum certified status (or be trained and be awaiting certification) in *NCCP Competition Introduction/World Rugby Level 2* or an equivalent qualification.

4.1.9 Rugby Ontario Members are required to obtain and keep a copy on record of the coaching certification held by each of their registered coaches.

4.1.10 A Member, upon request from the Rugby Ontario office, must submit copies of all coaching certifications held by current registrants of their club.

4.1.11 Any suspected non-compliance with the coaching requirements must be referred to the RO Office for follow-up.

4.2 Match Officials

Policy:

4.2.1 Further to policy 2.3.1, all match officials must be registered as a match official through the [Rugby Canada National Registration system](#).

4.2.2 Each registered match official under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario must have the required certification/training specified for that match and meet protocols as indicated in the Procedures of this section 4.2.

4.2.3 Match officials will be compensated at the discretion of and as determined by Rugby Ontario and as indicated in the Procedures of Section 4.2.

4.2.4 In each match under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario, match officials must wear the uniform determined by Rugby Ontario.

4.2.5 Every Rugby Ontario Member must have a minimum number of certified Level 1 club match officials (as indicated in 4.2.9) available to officiate at any club match where Rugby Ontario does not appoint a match official.

4.2.6 Appointments will be made as indicated in the Procedures of Section 4.2

4.2.7 All registered match officials must abide by the [Rugby Ontario Match Officials Code of Conduct](#).

4.2.8 All Match Officials are required to implement the [Blue Card](#) program in all matches under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario in the event a player has been suspected of sustaining a concussion – *refer to section 3.3.5*.

Procedures:

4.2.9 Each match under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario (excluding non-contact matches) must be officiated by a match official who is World Rugby certified at the level indicated in the RO Match Officials Appointment Precedence Chart.

4.2.10 In accordance with Rugby Canada's Play Smart Player Welfare Program, all registered match officials must have completed within the previous calendar year prior to officiating:

- (i) World Rugby's ["Rugby Ready"](#) and
- (ii) World Rugby's ["Concussion Management for the General Public"](#)
- (iii) World Rugby's ["Laws of The Game"](#)
- (iv) Ontario Ministry and Rugby Ontario Rowan's Law requirements

4.2.11 For Members with less than 20 teams participating in any given season, the minimum number of club match officials as per Policy 4.2.5 is two. For Members with between 20 and 30 teams, the minimum number is three. For Members with over 30 teams, the minimum number is four.

4.2.12 A Member, upon request from the Rugby Ontario office, must submit the names of all club match officials and their current level of certification.

4.2.13 A match official must provide to the RO office a minimum of 24 hours notice prior to the scheduled time for kick off of their inability to fulfill any appointment. Failure to do so may result in the Match official being sanctioned in accordance with Appendix A - Schedule of Sanctions.

4.2.14 Rugby Ontario, prior to the commencement of each season, shall notify all match officials of the uniform that is to be worn whilst officiating in matches under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario.

4.2.15 Any suspected non-compliance with the validity of a Match Official's World Rugby certification or Rugby Canada registration must be referred to the RO Office for follow-up.

4.2.16 Appointments will be made in accordance with the [Rugby Ontario Match Official Appointments Precedents Chart](#).

4.2.17 Compensation will be provided in accordance with the [Rugby Ontario Match Official Compensation Matrix](#).

5.0 Competitions

5.1 Recognized Competitions

Policy:

5.1.1 All matches (leagues, cups, tournaments, festivals and all other fixtures) played in or hosted by a RO member must be sanctioned by Rugby Ontario and, where required, by Rugby Canada. All Members must complete the applicable League Declaration Procedures, as prescribed by Rugby Ontario, to participate in relevant competitions.

5.1.2. All RO sanctioned matches will be organized and operated by Rugby Ontario, except where authority is delegated by Rugby Ontario to a Member.

5.1.3 The CEO will be responsible for determining:

- (i) the matches to be organized and operated by Rugby Ontario including new matches and the elimination of existing ones;
- (ii) the matches to be delegated to Branch Unions to organize and operate;
- (iii) the structure and rules of matches.

5.1.4 Branch Unions will be responsible for ensuring that matches conducted under their jurisdiction are operated in accordance with the policies and procedures documented in this section.

5.1.5 The participation of Ontario teams in matches under the jurisdiction of another rugby union in Canada or the USA will be governed by a Memorandum of Understanding between Rugby Ontario and/or the relevant Branch Union and the other union.

5.1.6 Incidents of non-compliance with the following procedures which are substantiated by the RO Office will be subject to the sanctions specified in Appendix A.

5.1.7 All sanctioned matches must be operated following the procedures listed in 5.1.8 to 5.1.24, except if the RO member has been granted permission by the RO office to supersede the procedures.

Procedures for all Matches operated by Rugby Ontario

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the player safety policies and procedures identified in this manual.

5.1.8 **World Rugby Laws of the Game** – All matches must be played in accordance with the [World Rugby Laws of the Game](#), [World Rugby Regulations](#) and any variations prescribed by Rugby Ontario or Rugby Canada.

5.1.9 Length of 15-a-side Matches – All matches in senior leagues shall consist of two 40-minute halves, except where the time period may be reduced at the discretion of the host/organizer sanctioned by the RO Office. The length of competitions in junior leagues shall be determined by the host/organizer sanctioned by the RO Office but must not exceed 70 minutes. The half-time interval must not exceed five (5) minutes if both teams remain on the field; otherwise, and only by prior agreement of both teams and the match official, the limit is 10 minutes.

5.1.10 Player Eligibility

(i) Each sanctioning/host organization may implement player eligibility criteria for their matches, but this criteria must include 5.1.10(ii) Imported Players.

(ii) **Imported Players** – A maximum of four (4) Imported Players per match per Member will be permitted. An Imported Player is defined as a person who:

- (i) is not a Canadian Citizen; or
- (ii) does not have Landed Immigrant status; or
- (iii) has not resided continuously within Canada for a period of 10 months preceding commencement of the match; or
- (iv) in the case of a resident of a community in the US, does not reside within 100 km of the official address of the host club as indicated in their Rugby Ontario Annual Membership

(iii) Members must inform Rugby Ontario of all imported players through the [Imported Player Notification Form](#), a minimum of 4 days prior to the player participating in any rugby related activities. Failure to do so may result in the Club being sanctioned in accordance with Appendix A – Schedule of Sanctions.

5.1.11 Playing Enclosure

- (i) The home team or host organization must ensure that the playing enclosure is clearly marked **by rope** or other form of demarcation in accordance with the requirements of [World Rugby Law 1 – The Ground](#). Clubs which are unable to comply with these requirements must apply in writing for an exemption or easement to the RO Office.
- (ii) For practical reasons, the demarcation requirements will vary by type of match. For major events, the whole enclosure including beyond the dead-ball lines will require marking with a physical barrier that is more effective than a single rope; for recreational games, a single rope stretching from goal line to goal line along a single touchline will be sufficient. In instances where ropes are used, they must have sufficient tension to form a clear barrier approximately one (1) metre above ground level for their whole length.

- (iii) The only persons allowed within the playing enclosure during a match are:
 - (a) the players (to the maximum of what the laws of that match allows)
 - (b) the match official(s)
 - (c) a designated substitute to bring water/kicking tee onto the field when authorized by a match official
 - (d) each team's trainer (only when required)
 - (e) medically trained personnel (only when required)

The home team/host organization is responsible for ensuring compliance with the above procedures. Any non-compliance must be reported by the Match Official on the [Rugby Ontario Game Sheet](#).

5.1.12 Scheduling

- (i) Teams must abide by dates, venues and kickoff times set out by the sanctioned match host. The process to request a change to the schedule will be set by the match host.
- (ii) Each match must commence at the scheduled kickoff time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In such instances, the match official may delay the start by up to one (1) hour.
- (iii) In exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Rugby Ontario office, Rugby Ontario may consider an application from a Member to reschedule a match.

5.1.13 Match Confirmation

- (i) Confirmation of the date, venue and kick off time of a match shall be published in the Rugby Ontario Competition Management System.
- (ii) Any request by either team to change the match date or venue must be submitted in writing to Rugby Ontario, no later than four (4) days prior to the match, stating the reasons for the request. The request shall only be approved if agreed upon by Rugby Ontario, the other team and the appointed match official.
- (iii) Any request by either team to change the kick off time must be submitted in writing to Rugby Ontario, no later than two (2) days prior to the match, stating the reasons for the request. The request shall only be approved if agreed upon by Rugby Ontario, the other team and the appointed match official.

5.1.14 Abandoned Match – In the event of abandonment, a replay will be allowed if it took place before 75% of the agreed time had expired. Otherwise, the score at the point of abandonment will stand. This rule is **not** binding if a match was ended by the match official before full time due to disciplinary problems on or off the field.

5.1.15 Replays

- (i) In the event that a match is cancelled or abandoned through circumstances beyond the control of either team and is required to be replayed, both teams within three (3) days of the scheduled kick-off time must submit three (3) alternative dates for the match to the other participating team. Failure to submit the alternative dates will result in that club defaulting the match.
- (ii) If no mutually agreed upon date can be found, it will be up to the sanctioning host/organization to determine if the match is ruled a 'no-play' (resulting in a tied game) or a default or the score at the time of the game being stopped stands.

5.1.16 Number of Players

- (i) Each team shall have a minimum of 12 players (for a 15 a side match) or 6 players (for a 7 a side match) dressed and on the field of play in appropriately numbered jerseys at the scheduled kickoff time. Other than at the junior level, matches must not be allowed to start with uncontested scrums due to the unavailability of players who can play in front row positions.
- (ii) Where two or more clubs have insufficient players to field a team in a league, they may apply to the RO Office to field a joint team (with a joint team name). In these circumstances, the registrants retain the registration with their home club and may participate in other teams within that club wherever eligible to do so.

5.1.17 Jerseys - In all competition matches, from Under 14 and up:

- (i) When two teams have jerseys of similar colour, the match official may direct the home team to wear a set of jerseys of contrasting colour.
- (ii) Every player must wear a numbered jersey.
- (iii) Two or more players shall not be permitted to wear the same numbered jersey.
- (iv) Each set of team jerseys must be sequentially numbered from Number 1 upwards.
- (v) Prior to the commencement of the season a team may apply to the RO office to have two letters on their jersey in place of numbers. Two or more players shall not be permitted to wear the same lettered jersey.

5.1.18 Game Sheet Administration

- (i) Prior to the start of the match, each team must enter their complete lineup (i.e. their game sheet) into the [Rugby Ontario Competition Management System](#). The complete lineup shall include correctly spelt first and last names including replacements/substitutes, front row players, designated medical person, team coach, ground manager and identifying any Imported Players.

- (ii) the number assigned to each player on the game sheet must correspond to the number on the jersey worn by that player.
- (iii) at the end of the match, the captain or coach of each team shall verify with the match official the final score. Once the score has been verified, the match official shall submit the score within 24 hours via the [Rugby Ontario Competition Management system](#).
- (iv) If two or more Members enter a joint team in a League, each Member shall have access to the list of eligible registered players of each Member for the purpose of creating the team game sheet.

5.1.19 Roster Size –. Nominated players and replacements/substitutes must follow the provisions of [World Rugby Law 3: Number of Players – The Team](#), including the “number of suitably trained and experienced players” available for front row positions depending on the size of the roster.

5.1.20 Player Substitution and Replacement

- (i) Unless otherwise stated by the League organizer, replacement of players during a senior rugby match must be in accordance with [World Rugby Law 3: Number of Players – The Team](#).
- (ii) When participation is the primary objective of a match (i.e. exhibition, non-League or non-Cup matches), any number of players may be substituted provided that both captains agree and the match official is so informed before the kick-off.
- (iii) In age grade matches, substitutions shall be made in accordance with the [Rugby Ontario Age Grade Variations](#).
- (iv) A player participating in one match must not be used as a replacement in another match being played at the same time.

5.1.21 League Standings

- (i) Each team in each division will play the same number of matches and its position will be determined by the number of points awarded: Win – 4 points; Tie – 2 points; Loss – 0 points; 4 or more tries scored in one match – 1 bonus point; Loss by 7 points or less – 1 bonus point.
- (ii) In the event of a tie in the standings at the end of the season between two or more teams, positions will be determined by the following rules in order of priority:
 - a) the team with the fewer defaults will be placed higher; otherwise
 - b) the team with the most number of wins; otherwise
 - c) the team with the most number of wins in matches between the teams; otherwise
 - d) the team which has scored more points in matches between the tied teams will be placed higher (N.B. this rule does not apply if more than two teams have tied); otherwise

- e) the team with the greater difference between total points scored and total points conceded in all matches will be placed higher; otherwise
- f) the team with the greater ratio of points scored to points conceded will be placed higher.
- g) In determining positions under (d) – (f) above between two teams, A and B, where team A won a match by default against team C, then the points scored in the equivalent match between team B and team C will be deducted from team B's total.

5.1.22 Defaults

- (i) If a team defaults a match, the non-offending team will be awarded a win with a score of 20-0, receive four (4) points for the win and an automatic bonus point.
- (ii) The defaulting team shall be penalized 4 competition points.
- (iii) In Rugby Ontario administered Senior Men's and Women's Leagues, where a Member defaults a 2nd team match scheduled after the 31st August, there shall be no financial penalty imposed on that Member.
- (iv) Prior to defaulting a match, the team intending to default may reach out to the opposition team with a proposal to reschedule the match. Any such rescheduling will be entirely at the discretion of the opposition team and must be completed prior to the final round of scheduled matches in that competition.

5.1.23 Score Reporting – The process for score reporting for all matches shall be determined and advised by the sanctioning/host organization. Failure to comply with the reporting instructions may result in the imposition of sanctions.

5.1.24 Sudden Death -At the end of regulation time in 15-a side knockout matches in all Cups/Leagues, if the two teams are drawn there will be a coin toss and the teams will play sudden-death (i.e. until one team scores) overtime consisting of two 10-minute periods. In the event of no score, sudden death will be extended (in senior leagues only) by two additional 5-minute periods. If there is no score during overtime or in extraordinary circumstances (e.g. a catastrophic injury) resulting in the match being abandoned during overtime, then the winner will be the team scoring:

- (i) The greater number of tries; or failing that
- (ii) The greater number of dropped goals; or failing that
- (iii) The greater number of penalty goals; or failing that
- (iv) The greater number of conversions in a kicking competition pre-announced by the sanctioning/host organization.

Additional Procedures for Marshall and Ontario Women's Leagues

5.1.25 The league structures including the number of teams and criteria governing participation, promotion and relegation will be determined by the CEO.

5.1.26 Participation – Participation will take into account the following criteria:

- (i) Is the Member in good standing?
- (ii) Has the Member completed the League Declaration Procedure?
- (iii) Can it meet the coaching requirements specified in section 4.1?
- (iv) Does its playing facility meet the requirements specified in paragraph 3.7?
- (v) Is its second team capable of meeting its travel obligations?
- (vi) Does it agree to participate in the McCormick/Fall/OWL Cup?
- (vii) Is it able to meet any other requirements that may be established?
- (viii) Does it accept that decisions issued by the RO Office regarding infractions of these procedures are final and may not be appealed provided that due process has been followed?

5.1.27 Player Eligibility for Transferring Players

(i) A transferring player, in order to be eligible to play on a Marshall/OWL 1st team, must transfer to that Member prior to the Member completing 50% of its scheduled regular season matches in that league.

(ii) A Member can apply for an exemption to 5.1.27(i) for a player of Ontario origin in circumstances where they have been registered outside of Ontario in order to participate in a Rugby Canada national team program conducted outside of Ontario and this has prevented their participation in the Marshall/OWL League.

5.1.28 Playoff Matches

(i) A player, in order to be eligible to participate in a league playoff match, must be registered as a player with that Member prior to the Member completing 50% of its scheduled regular season matches in that league.

(ii) A Member can apply for an exemption to 5.1.28(i) for a player of Ontario origin in circumstances where they have been registered outside of Ontario in order to participate in a Rugby Canada national team program conducted outside of Ontario and this has prevented their participation in that League.

(iii) The League sanctioning host/organization shall determine and communicate the dates and times for any playoff matches at the time of release of the regular season schedule.

(iv) For playoff matches, the higher placed team following the conclusion of regular season matches shall be considered to be the “home team”. Unless the sanctioning host/organization determines and notifies both teams of the venue, the “home team” is responsible for determining the venue of the match. This venue must be notified to both the sanctioning host/organization and the “away team” within 48 hours of the team being advised they are the “home team” and responsible for determining the venue.

Additional Procedures for Rugby Ontario Non-League Championships

5.1.29 There will be a McCormick Cup and Fall Cup for teams participating in the Marshall Leagues. There will be an OWL Cup for teams participating in the Ontario Women's leagues. Teams in leagues in geographic areas which do not participate in these leagues may be invited to participate.

5.1.30 Marshall and OWL first teams, unless participating in the Intermediate Cup, may be invited to participate in the McCormick Cup, Fall Cup or OWL Cup respectively.

5.1.31 A previously unregistered player, in order to be eligible to participate in any McCormick Cup or Fall Cup match, must be registered as a senior or junior player with that Member prior to commencement of the relevant Cup.

5.1.32 A transferring player, in order to be eligible to participate in a McCormick Cup or Fall Cup match, must transfer to that Member prior to the Member completing 50% of its scheduled Marshall league season matches.

5.1.33 There will be a Men's and Women's Intermediate Cup, the champions of which will be invited to participate in the Marshall Championship and Ontario Women's Leagues respectively, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria identified in 5.1.26.

5.1.34 Second teams in the Marshall Leagues or Branch Union First League teams may enter the Gee Gage Cup if the competition is held.

5.1.35 Teams losing in the first round of the McCormick Cup, Fall Cup, Gee Gage Cup or OWL Cup (if these Cups are a knockout competition) are required to participate in the respective Consolation matches.

5.1.36 Teams in the second division of the Ontario Women's League may enter the OWL 2 Cup if the competition is held.

5.1.37 In the event of abandonment, the replay may take place on the following day at the same venue provided that both captains and the match official agree; otherwise, it shall take place at a date to be determined by the RO Office in consultation with both clubs.

5.1.38 If a club defaults a match in any round, it will be expelled from further participation and subject to the sanctions specified in Appendix A Schedule of Sanctions.

Procedures for Intermediate Cups

5.1.39 The Branch Union representative will normally be the champion of the most senior league organized by that Union. If a Branch Union wishes its representative to be other than

its senior league champion, it must advise the RO Office, otherwise its entry may be forfeited.

5.1.40 A player, in order to be eligible to participate in the Intermediate Cup, must have registered as a senior or junior player with that Member prior to the Member completing 50% of its scheduled matches in their regular season league.

5.1.41 A Member can apply for an exemption to 5.1.40 for a player of Ontario origin in circumstances where they have been registered outside of Ontario in order to participate in a Rugby Canada national team program conducted outside of Ontario and this has prevented their participation in their regular season Ontario League.

Procedures for Junior Provincial Championships

5.1.42 If the Championship is held, Members will be provided with details by 1st June. This will include the Junior Provincial Championship playing regulations.

5.1.43 (i) A player, in order to be eligible to participate in the Junior Provincial Championship must be registered as a player with that Member prior to the Member completing 75% of its scheduled regular season matches in that league.

(ii) In the case of a player registered with TIRF, they must be assigned to that member prior to the Member completing 75% of its scheduled regular season matches in that league.

5.1.44 The maximum number of players that may participate for one team at the Junior Provincial Championship is 30.

Procedures for Other Non–League Championships

5.1.45 The RO Office will provide procedures for any other Non-League Championships upon confirmation that they are taking place.

Procedures for Minor Rugby and Minor Festivals

5.1.46 A Member wishing to host a Minor Festival must inform Rugby Ontario of all the teams participating in the Festival by either:

- (i) submitting a completed [Rugby Ontario Minor Festival Club Participation Form](#); or
- (ii) completing the event process through the [Rugby Ontario Competition Management System](#).

5.1.47 All Members of Rugby Ontario, a Provincial Union or a National Union are eligible to participate. Non-Members who wish to participate must apply to the RO office in writing, providing a letter of support from the host Member, insurance details, any other information and pay any participation fees as determined by Rugby Ontario.

5.1.48 Each participating team must keep a roster of players who participate in each Minor Festival. This roster must be provided to the RO office on request.

5.1.49 Notwithstanding the policy in 2.4.1, a minor player may participate in the rugby activities for a Member(s) other than the Member for whom they are registered.

5.1.50 A Member wishing to host a Minor festival must communicate their proposed date to Rugby Ontario as soon as is practical.

5.1.51 Rugby Ontario will maintain and make available to Members a schedule of all minor festivals communicated to the RO Office.

Procedures for Law Variations for Junior Rugby

5.1.52 All Minor and junior matches under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario will be played in accordance with the relevant Rugby Ontario Age Grade Variations and RO laws for [Minors](#) and [Juniors](#).

5.1.53 Rugby Ontario will develop additional law variations for age grade rugby as it deems appropriate.

Joint Teams for Leagues

5.1.54 Where player critical mass restricts the ability of a Member(s) to enter a team into a League, two or more Members may make written application to the League organizer (i.e. Rugby Ontario or the relevant Branch Union) to enter a joint team in that League. Any application shall include the proposed name of all Members involved in the joint team.

5.1.55 Any such joint team shall not participate in the League until written permission has been provided by the relevant League organizer.

5.1.56 The registration of any registrant who participates in a joint team shall remain with their Member and the registrant shall be eligible to participate in other rugby activities of that Member.

6.0 Rugby Ontario High Performance Programs

6.1 Recognized Teams

Policy:

6.1.1 Rugby Ontario will operate male and female High Performance teams at both junior and senior levels. The list of teams each year will be determined by the CEO.

6.1.2 In accordance with Policy 2.3.1, to be eligible to participate in a tryout for a Rugby Ontario High Performance program, a player must be currently registered in the Rugby Canada National registration system.

6.1.3. Notwithstanding Policy 2.3.1, in special circumstances, a player will be eligible for the Senior Men's or Women's High Performance teams if holding a valid registration with Rugby Canada through a club in another Provincial Union.

6.1.4 Any individual not in good standing with Rugby Canada or Rugby Ontario will be ineligible to participate in any High Performance program of Rugby Ontario or Rugby Canada including trials and tryouts.

6.1.5 All players selected to a High Performance team program must complete all requirements as set out in Procedures of Section 6.1 prior to participating in any team event or activity.

6.1.6 Each Rugby Ontario High Performance team/squad will be selected in accordance with the relevant Rugby Ontario Selection Policy outlined in 6.1.13.

Procedures:

6.1.7 The selection process will be clearly identified to all trialists prior to the commencement of the tryouts.

6.1.8 A [Rugby Ontario Provincial Program Tryout Registration Form](#) will be provided to all trialists for completion prior to the commencement of any tryouts.

6.1.9 Further to Policy 6.1.5, all players selected to a High Performance program must, before being permitted to participate in any team activity or event:

- (i) complete and sign the [Rugby Ontario High Performance Program Athlete Agreement – Senior/Junior Teams](#)
- (ii) complete and sign the [Rugby Ontario Athlete Medical Information Form](#); and
- (iii) pay any applicable program fees.

6.1.10 The RO Office will be responsible for:

- (i) the annual appointment of the manager, head coach, assistant coaches, athletic therapists and any other staff of each representative team; and
- (ii) providing them with the information necessary to efficiently and effectively carry out their duties.

6.1.11 Before being permitted to participate in any team activity or event, all appointed team officials must have:

- (i) a valid registration with Rugby Ontario/Rugby Canada;

- (ii) a current Vulnerable Sector Screening check on file with Rugby Ontario;
- (iii) signed the [Rugby Ontario Coach & Managers Code of Conduct](#)
- (iv) the coaching qualifications (for coaching roles) specified in section 4.1;
- (v) met all Ontario Ministry and Rugby Ontario requirements in relation to Rowan's Law
- (vi) met any other criteria as established and communicated by Rugby Ontario

6.1.12 The financial and other procedures to be followed by officials are specified in the *Rugby Ontario High Performance Programs Handbook* which will be provided on request by the RO Office.

6.1.13 The [Rugby Ontario Selection Policies](#) are available to all interested parties.

7.0 Discipline Policy & Procedures

7.1 Jurisdiction over Disciplinary Matters

Policy

7.1.1 Rugby Ontario and or its Branch Unions have the jurisdiction to discipline any Member, registrant or individual **in relation to a breach of any Rugby Ontario policy or procedure.**

7.1.2 All touring teams are subject to Rugby Ontario Discipline Policy and Procedures while in Ontario. Any breaches will be referred to their home union via Rugby Canada.

7.1.3 Rugby Ontario and each of its Branch Unions will appoint a Director who is responsible for administering the disciplinary procedures identified in sections 7.3-7.6.

7.1.4 Branch Unions will deal with player send-offs and player citings which occur in and as a consequence of matches that are played within their geographic boundaries as defined by Rugby Ontario but may request at any time that they be handled by Rugby Ontario.

7.1.5 The RO Discipline, Appeals & Investigations Committee will deal with all incidents of misconduct by match officials (e.g. abuse towards another match official or person) or directed to match officials (e.g. Match Official abuse).

7.1.6 Rugby Ontario will deal with all other complaints which involves a breach of Rugby Ontario policy including:

- (i) Incidents of misconduct involving players or other members of the Ontario rugby community that occur outside Ontario (unless dealt with by Rugby Canada or another Rugby Union);

- (ii) Incidents resulting in any other written complaints, including complaints relating to internal club matters, which a club fails to investigate, or which a party is not satisfied with the process or result of an internal club investigation.

7.1.7 When incidents take place at a match between educational establishments (schools, community colleges or universities) and are dealt with by their administrative jurisdictions, Rugby Ontario and its Members, if advised by the relevant jurisdiction, will support any sanctions that they impose.

7.1.8 When incidents involving Rugby Ontario registrants occur outside Ontario and are dealt with by other Unions in Canada or internationally, Rugby Ontario and its Members, if advised by the relevant jurisdiction, will support any sanctions imposed by those Unions.

7.1.9 Organizers of Tournaments and other special events under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario are permitted to establish an Event Discipline Committee. However, any sanctions applied by such a committee must be restricted to the event. Send-offs and other incidents must be reported by the match official to the appropriate governing body for handling in the same way as any other incident (refer to sections 7.3-7.6).

7.2 Non-compliance with Administrative Requirements for Matches

Policy:

7.2.1 All incidents of actual or alleged non-compliance by Members or Registrants with the administrative requirements governing their participation in Rugby Ontario matches will be followed up by the RO Office and sanctions applied where appropriate. These requirements cover the following areas:

- (i) Tour Sanctioning (section 2.5)
- (ii) Serious Injury Reporting (section 3.1)
- (iii) Emergency Action Plans (section 3.2)
- (iv) Concussion Management (section 3.3)
- (v) Availability of Medical Personnel and Equipment (section 3.6)
- (vi) Playing Surface Conditions (section 3.7)
- (vii) Junior Player Eligibility for Rugby in Different Age Categories (section 3:10)
- (viii) Player Eligibility to Participate in a Different Gender Category (section 3:11)
- (ix) Domestic and Imported Player Registration (section 5.1)
- (x) Game Sheet and Scoring Administration (section 5.1)
- (xi) Schedule Change Approvals (section 5.1)
- (xii) Player Eligibility (section 5.1)
- (xiii) Player Substitution and Replacement (section 5.1)
- (xiv) Match Defaults (section 5.1)

7.2.2 The sanctions listed in Appendix A – *Schedule of Sanctions* – will be determined annually by the CEO based on input from the relevant committees.

Procedures for Handling Match Default Claims and Rescheduling:

7.2.3 Where a team defaults a match or a match is rescheduled at a sufficiently early time (i.e minimum 36 hours notice), so that neither team nor any match officials is required to attend the match venue, the defaulting team or team who requested the rescheduling through their Club President or Secretary must:

- (i) advise the Club President and Secretary of the other team and the RO Match Official Coordinator via e-mail of their default or the rescheduling;
- (ii) copy the RO Competitions and Events Coordinator on all such correspondence.

7.2.4 The captain of the team claiming a default must inform the match official and the captain of the opposing team before the kick-off that the alleged default took place. Unless there are clear safety reasons for not playing the match, failure to do so may invalidate the claim.

7.2.5 When a Member claims that an opposing team is in default or wishes to protest the result of a match for some other reason, it must submit to the RO Office with simultaneous copy to the opposing Member, a written explanation of the circumstances including all pertinent information. To be valid, this submission must be sent within three (3) days of the scheduled date of the match.

7.2.6 Upon notice of an allegation, the defending Member must submit to the RO Office a written explanation of the circumstances including all pertinent details. To be valid, this submission must be sent within seven (7) days of the scheduled date of the match.

7.2.7 Immediately upon receipt of the submission, the RO office will consider the allegations; collect such additional evidence as is considered necessary; and, if the allegations are found to be true, assess such penalties as are deemed appropriate in accordance with the sanctions listed in Appendix A – *Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines*.

7.2.8 If a team defaults or requests the rescheduling of a match, its Member will be liable for all reasonable costs incurred by the non-offending team and any match officials, together with any match payments to which any appointed match officials are entitled.

7.2.9 A team may be barred from further competition until its obligations and penalties have been actioned.

7.2.10 If time or other circumstances do not allow the above procedures to be followed, the RO office will take the steps necessary to resolve the dispute in the time available.

7.2.11 The RO Office decision will, as soon as practicable, be communicated via email to the Members involved.

7.2.12 Provided that both Members involved have had the opportunity to present information as noted above, the decision of the RO Office will be final.

Procedures for Handling Administrative Complaints other than Match Default Claims:

7.2.13 A complainant must provide a written report to the RO Office. To be actioned, it must be signed with contact details provided, and sent within three (3) days of the match to the RO Office.

7.2.14 If the non-compliance is identified in the RO Office, a report will be prepared.

7.2.15 The RO Office will, as soon as practicable, e-mail a copy of the report to the named Member requesting its response by a specified date.

7.2.16 The report, response and any clarifications will be referred to the Discipline, Appeals and Investigations Committee for its consideration.

7.2.17 The RO Office will notify the named Member and the complainant of the Committee's decision.

7.3 Disciplinary Actions

Policy:

7.3.1 The policy and procedures in this section govern Discipline Panels established at the Rugby Ontario, Branch Union, Club and Referees Society levels and cover all rugby activities and sanctioned events under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario.

7.3.2 Disciplinary actions will be based on breaches of the [Rugby Ontario Registrant's Code of Conduct](#) and/or any Specific Code of Conduct (e.g. player, coach, match official, parent/spectator). All non-registrants are bound by the Rugby Ontario [Parents/Guardians/Spectators Code of Conduct](#).

7.3.3 Members are responsible for the actions of their registrants, officials, administrators and spectators in relation to all matters that occur under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario. This includes, but is not limited to, taking all precautions necessary to prevent them from threatening or assaulting anyone present at matches, especially match officials and opposing team registrants and officials. In the event that an individual cannot be readily identified as being affiliated with a Member, then the home team shall be responsible for that individual.

7.3.4 Any individual reported for an alleged misconduct has the right to appear at a Hearing at their own expense.

7.3.5 The RO Office will provide a written copy of the discipline decision to all affected parties.

7.3.6 For discipline decisions rendered under the Discipline by Hearing process (refer to section 8 - *Hearings*), parties as outlined in section 9 - *Appeals* - have the right to appeal a decision. The discipline decision will remain in effect pending the results of the appeal.

7.3.7 Any party directly affected by a decision shall have the right to request and receive a copy of the findings of the case. However, the minutes of a Discipline Panel must be kept confidential.

7.3.8 All discipline cases must be handled in a timely fashion. The failure of one party to respond to communications will not delay proceedings.

Procedures:

7.3.9 Members are required to follow the [Rugby Ontario Unruly Individuals Procedure](#) in dealing with problematic situations.

7.3.10 Members should adopt procedures to monitor compliance by their registrants of the [Rugby Ontario Registrant's Code of Conduct](#) and impose sanctions for any non-compliance independently of any discipline actions that may be taken by Rugby Ontario.

7.3.11 The Discipline, Investigations and Appeals Committee will be responsible for administering all procedures governing:

- (i) Player Send-Offs
- (ii) Misconduct Before, During or After a Match other than a Send-Off
- (iii) Other Misconduct, excluding Harassment and Child Protection matters

7.3.12 Send-off proceedings will usually be completed in seven (7) days and within 14 days at the most; other proceedings will usually be completed within 14 days and within 30 days at the most.

7.4 Player Send-Offs

Policy:

7.4.1 When a player in a match, including a player on the bench, commits an offence that requires the individual to be sent off, the match official must:

- (i) Take the player's name, in consultation with the team captain;

- (ii) Inform the team captain and the player of the reason for the send-off;
- (iii) Order the player from the playing enclosure.

7.4.2 The match official must complete and submit the Rugby Ontario *Discipline Report through the Rugby Ontario online Competition Management system*.

7.4.3 If the send-off is the result of an intervention by an assistant referee, a written report must be submitted by that assistant referee.

7.4.4 The player who is sent-off, the team captain and their Member are responsible for following the procedures set out below.

Procedures:

7.4.5 The **player** who is sent-off must:

- (i) Leave the playing enclosure immediately and without argument or protest;
- (ii) Advise a representative of the Club Executive of the send-off and reason as soon as possible. When playing for a representative team, the “Club” is the Member with which the player is registered; and
- (iii) Not play in another match until the appropriate Discipline Director has granted written permission.

7.4.6 The **team captain** must provide details of the incident to a representative of the Club Executive as soon as possible.

7.4.7 The **Member**, within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match, must:

- (i) Appoint an Official, normally the Secretary, to be the Official to whom all communications will be sent;
- (ii) E-mail the RO Office at discipline@rugbyontario.com and provide the name, phone and e-mail address of the Official.
- (iii) Notify the RO Office and the Branch Discipline Director if the player has been incorrectly identified as a result of a *Game Sheet* error or other irregularity and provide the correct name. Failure to do this will be considered a Game Sheet infraction; and
- (iv) Not allow the Player to take part in another match until the appropriate Discipline Director or Judicial Officer has granted written permission.

7.4.8 The **Official** is responsible for:

- (i) Identifying the Branch Discipline Director;
- (ii) Keeping the player informed of all proceedings; and
- (iii) Presenting any defence on behalf of the player in a written submission and/or at a Hearing.

7.4.9 If the Match Official's report is not received within the prescribed timeframe after the known send-off, the Discipline Director will:

- (i) Be entitled to proceed with investigation into the known or reported misconduct and to dispose of the matter as if a report had been received;
- (ii) Provide the RO Office with the name of the Match Official who failed to submit a report.

7.5 Misconduct or Incidents Before, During or After a Match other than a Send-Off

Policy:

7.5.1 If a Match Official before, during or after a match, deems the conduct of a player, team official, club member or spectator to be abusive, threatening or harassing to any person present; or in breach of the World Rugby Laws of the Game and/or its Regulations; or in any way otherwise detrimental to the reputation or decorum of the Game, the **Match Official** must;

- (i) Obtain the alleged offender's name and club affiliation;
- (ii) Inform the Relevant Team Captain or other Club Official of the alleged misconduct and that a report will be submitted to the RO Office; and
- (iii) Complete and submit the [Rugby Ontario Misconduct Report Form](#)

7.5.2 Each club must appoint a Ground Manager for each match, with whom the Match Officials may communicate with in regard to 7.5.1. The Ground Manager:

- (i) shall identify themselves to the match official prior to the start of the match
- (ii) shall not be a player or coach participating in the match

7.5.3 If a Match official is unable, following reasonable effort with the assistance of both Ground Managers, to identify the offender(s) and/or their Member affiliation, then the home Member shall be considered to be responsible for the behaviour.

7.5.4 If a Match Official submits a complaint about encroachment into the playing enclosure; or abuse from outside the playing enclosure or by non-participants within the playing enclosure, including persistent criticism, insulting conduct or remarks, or threats of violence, the Relevant Member will be required to answer the complaint following the procedures set out below.

7.5.5 A Member may lodge an incident report for an event that occurs on the field of play during a match which is not witnessed by any of the appointed Match Officials. An incident report may not be lodged for an event that is witnessed by any of the appointed Match Officials.

Procedures:

7.5.5 The **Member** of the individual and/or the Member who has been named on the *RO Incident Report Form* must upon being advised of the report:

- (i) Appoint an Official, normally the Secretary, to be the Official to whom all communications will be sent;
- (ii) e-mail the RO Office at discipline@rugbyontario.com and provide the name, phone and e-mail address of the offender;
- (iii) Notify the RO Office at discipline@rugbyontario.com if, in the case of a player or official, the offender has been incorrectly identified as a result of a *Game Sheet* error or other irregularity and provide the correct name. Failure to do this will be considered a Game Sheet infraction; and

7.5.6 The **Official** is responsible for:

- (i) Keeping the named individual informed of all proceedings;
- (ii) Presenting any defence on behalf of the individual in a written submission and/or at a Hearing.

7.5.7 When a Match Official registers a verbal complaint with the Relevant Team Captain, Ground Manager or Member Official at the time of the alleged abuse, the Member must take prompt action following the [*Rugby Ontario Unruly Individuals Procedure*](#).

7.5.8 When a *RO Misconduct Report Form* is submitted by an assistant referee, the appointed Match Official must be informed.

7.5.9 If the Match Official incorrectly identifies the person responsible for the reported misconduct and if the Member correctly identifies the offending party, then the Discipline Panel may require both parties together with the Match Official to attend the hearing in order for the Match Official to identify the correct person.

7.5.10 Further to 7.5.1, the Match Official must submit the *RO Misconduct Report Form* to the RO Office in accordance with the process indicated on the form.

7.6 Other Misconduct (Excluding Harassment or Child Protection matters)

Policy:

7.6.1 Any person may submit a complaint about the conduct of any Member, individual, or team which involves a breach of Rugby Ontario policy. Where a complaint is lodged it must be initially submitted in its entirety, including any supporting documentation such as witness statements or video evidence. Once lodged, further documentation may not be added to a complaint.

7.6.2 Where all the parties to a complaint are individuals or teams affiliated with one Member, the complaint must first be lodged in writing to the Board of that Member. Any such complaint must be lodged within 7 days of the alleged incident. The Board shall convene a Panel to hear the complaint. The Panel must not involve anyone who is part of the complaint. Where appropriate, the Member may issue sanctions in accordance with Appendix A – Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines. Rugby Ontario must be advised of any such sanctions issued. The Member, at their discretion, may refer the complaint directly to Rugby Ontario.

7.6.3 Where a Member fails to investigate within 14 days a written complaint submitted in accordance with 7.6.2, the complainant may refer the matter to Rugby Ontario. This must be done in writing within 7 days after the expiration of this 14 day period.

7.6.4 Any party to a complaint heard by a Member, may appeal the result of that complaint to Rugby Ontario. Any such appeal must be lodged in writing within 7 days of the Member handing down its decision.

7.6.5 Where the parties to a complaint are individuals or teams affiliated with multiple Members, the complaint is to be lodged with Rugby Ontario. To be considered, the complaint must be submitted in writing to the RO Office within 30 days of the incident and give full details of the incident and the parties involved.

Procedures:

7.6.6 Any complaint shall be lodged using the [Rugby Ontario Misconduct Report Form](#).

7.6.7 Any referral to Rugby Ontario in accordance with 7.6.3 or Appeal in accordance with 7.6.4 shall be lodged at discipline@rugbyontario.com

7.7 Handling Player Send-Offs, Misconduct and Incident Reports

Policy:

7.7.1 Upon receiving a *Discipline Report* or [Misconduct Report Form](#) the RO office will:

- (i) arrange for the investigation of the reported incident or misconduct;
- (ii) provide an opportunity for all parties to present evidence; and
- (iii) if appropriate, apply sanctions against the person(s) involved.

Procedures:

7.7.2 A player who is sent-off or reported for Match Official abuse has the right to request a hearing provided that it is submitted in writing to discipline@rugbyontario.com within two

(2) days of the match. Upon receiving the request, the Discipline Director will follow the Discipline by Hearing process.

7.7.3 If a player who is sent-off or reported for Match Official abuse does not request a hearing, the case will be handled through the Discipline by Review process.

7.7.4 For all incident or misconduct reports not involving a player sent off, including citings, the appointed Judicial Officer through the RO office will within three (3) days of receiving the report:

- determine if each alleged offender is:
 - a. a registrant of Rugby Ontario; or
 - b. identifiable as being in habitual attendance at matches in the company of registrants and/or representatives of that Member.
- decide whether the report has merit and if the disciplinary process should proceed.
- contact the *Complainant* in writing, acknowledging receipt of report and if the disciplinary process is proceeding:
 - a. advise proceedings will be in accordance with the approved Rugby Ontario policies and procedures governing disciplinary matters;
 - b. indicate all future communications must be directed to the Judicial Officer.
 - c. Copy the Club President of the Complainant. Where the complaint is against the President, the Club Secretary or a representative of the Club Executive shall be advised.
- if the discipline process is proceeding, decide whether or not to keep proceedings confidential until an outcome has been determined. Therefore, all parties who are contacted about the alleged misconduct will be advised to respect the requirement for confidentiality. In addition, the Judicial Officer will want to determine if the proceedings should involve the Club or Referee's Society to which the subject of the complaint belongs.
- if the discipline process is proceeding, contact the alleged offender and the relevant Club representative in writing and advise that:
 - a. a complaint has been received (attach a copy of the complaint) and is being investigated;
 - b. proceedings will be governed by Rugby Ontario's approved policies and procedures;
 - c. all future communications should be directed to the Judicial Officer;
 - d. the following three options are available to the alleged offender(s) and ask for notification in writing within five (5) days on how each alleged offender wishes to proceed:
 - i. Submit a written defence against the alleged misconduct and have the case handled using the Discipline by Review process; or

- II. Submit a written defence against the alleged misconduct and request the case to be handled using the Discipline by Hearing process; or
- III. Plead guilty.

If option I. or II. is chosen the alleged offender must submit their written defence in full at the time of reply, including any supporting documentation such as witness statements, video evidence and/or character references. Further information may not be submitted after this time.

If option I. or III. is taken, then the alleged offender loses the right to appeal the decision.

7.7.6 If the alleged offender fails to respond within the requested five (5) days, the Judicial Officer will be entitled to assume that no defence is being submitted and the case will be handled using the Discipline by Review process.

Modified Procedures for Foul Play in Sevens

7.7.7 For all Sevens matches played under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario, [World Rugby Regulations 17. 29 to 17. 36](#) shall apply.

7.8 Handling Harassment Complaints (Please also refer to Sections 3.13, 8.6 and 9.2)

Policy:

7.8.1 After receiving a complaint, the Provincial Harassment Officer (PHO) will, as soon as practicable, contact both the complainant and the alleged harasser to indicate who will be handling the complaint and that follow-up action is underway.

Application

7.8.2 Members are responsible for the actions of their registrants, officials, administrators and spectators in relation to all matters that occur under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario. If, at a match, an alleged harasser cannot be readily identified as being affiliated with a Member, then the Member which is the home team shall be responsible for that individual.

Procedures:

7.8.3 The PHO will inform the complainant of:

- (i) the options for pursuing an informal resolution of the complaint;
- (ii) the right to lay a formal written complaint under Rugby Ontario's Harassment Policy (refer to section 3.13) when an informal resolution is inappropriate or not feasible;
- (iii) the availability of a network of referrals and other support provided by Rugby Ontario;

- (iv) the confidentiality provisions of the Harassment Policy;
- (v) the right to be represented by a person of choice (including legal counsel) at any stage in the complaint handling process;
- (vi) the external mediation/arbitration mechanisms that may be available;
- (vii) the right to withdraw from any further action in connection with the complaint at any stage (even though Rugby Ontario may continue to investigate);
- (viii) other avenues of recourse, including the right to file a complaint with a Human Rights Commission or, where appropriate, to contact the police to have them lay a formal charge under the Criminal Code; and
- (ix) the responsibility of the PHO, having reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is in need of protection, to report the suspicion and the information on which it is based to a Child Welfare agency.

7.8.4 There are four possible outcomes to this initial contact between the complainant and PHO:

- a) They agree that the conduct does not constitute harassment. If this occurs, the PHO will take no further action and make no written record other than providing the CEO with a record of such complaint.
- b) The complainant brings evidence of harassment and chooses to pursue an informal resolution of the complaint. If this occurs:
 - The PHO will assist the two parties to negotiate a solution acceptable to the complainant. If desired by the parties and, if appropriate, the PHO may also seek the assistance of a neutral mediator.
 - If informal resolution yields a result which is acceptable to both parties, the PHO will make a written record that a complaint was made and resolved informally to the satisfaction of both parties; and will take no further action.
 - If informal resolution fails to satisfy the complaint, the complainant may reserve the option of laying a formal written complaint.
- c) The complainant brings evidence of harassment and decides to lay a formal written complaint. If this occurs:
 - The PHO will assist the complainant in drafting a formal written complaint, to be signed by the complainant and a copy given to the respondent without delay.
 - The written complaint must set out the details of the incident and the names of any witnesses to the incident; and be dated and signed.
 - The respondent will be given an opportunity to provide a written response to the complaint. The PHO may assist in preparing this response which must be received within 15 days.

d) The complainant brings evidence of harassment but does not wish to lay a formal complaint. If this occurs:

- The PHO will decide if the alleged harassment is serious enough to warrant laying a formal written complaint, even if it is against the wishes of the complainant.
- When the PHO decides that the evidence and surrounding circumstances require a formal written complaint, it will be issued without delay to the complainant and respondent.

7.8.5 As soon as possible after receiving the written complaint, but within 30 days, the PHO will submit a report to the CEO containing the documentation filed by both parties along with a recommendation that:

- (i) No further action be taken because the complaint is unfounded, or the conduct cannot reasonably be said to fall within Rugby Ontario's definition of harassment; or
- (ii) The complaint should proceed because the alleged conduct reasonably fits within the definition of harassment;
- (iii) The report be provided without delay to the complainant and respondent.

If the CEO is involved in the complaint, the PHO's report must be submitted to the Secretary of Rugby Ontario or any other Officer not involved in the complaint.

7.8.6 If the PHO's recommendation is to proceed, the CEO (or Officer of Rugby Ontario to whom the report was submitted) will within 15 days appoint three (3) registrants of Rugby Ontario to serve as a Case Review Panel. Panel membership must include both genders and, to ensure freedom from bias, they must have no significant personal or professional relationship with either the complainant or respondent.

7.8.7 Where the PHO requires any further written documentation or evidence from either party this must be submitted within 7 days. If the complainant fails to provide this information, the PHO may dismiss the complaint. If the alleged harasser fails to provide this information, the PHO may proceed.

7.9 Handling Child Protection Incidents (Please also refer to Section 3.14)

Policy:

7.9.1 After a concern has been reported, the Provincial Child Protection Officer (PCPO) will conduct an Initial Assessment to determine whether there is reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child has been abused or harmed or is at risk of abuse or harm. In conducting this assessment, the PCPO may consult external agencies such as the police and social work services for advice as they may hold other important information relevant to the reported concern.

Procedures:

7.9.2 If it is not clear at this stage whether or not a criminal offence has been committed, the subject of the complaint may be approached as part of the information gathering process. Where the nature and seriousness of the information gathered suggests that a criminal offence may have been committed, or that to assess the facts may jeopardize evidence, advice will be sought from the police before the named individual is approached and the parents/guardian of the child are informed.

7.9.3 If the Initial Assessment requires a child to be asked some questions, they must be asked **solely with a view to clarifying the basic facts**. As such, the questions should be basic, open-ended and non-leading. If possible, they should be asked with the consent of a parent or guardian. It is important that the interviewing (i.e. formal questioning) of children about possible abuse and criminal offences is the sole jurisdiction of specially trained police officers and social workers.

7.9.4 The potential outcomes of an Initial Assessment are:

- (i) No further action (facts do not substantiate complaint);
- (ii) Matter dealt with under procedures to manage poor practice (refer to *Guide to Protect Children Playing Rugby in Ontario*);
- (iii) Matter dealt with under Rugby Ontario disciplinary procedures (refer to Section 7.3);
- (iv) Child protection investigation (jointly by police and social work services);
- (v) Criminal investigation (by police). It should be noted that the results may influence any ongoing or subsequent disciplinary investigation; or
- (vi) Civil proceedings (by the child/family who reported the alleged abuse).

7.9.5 If the Initial Assessment identifies poor practices and/or misconduct by the named individual but **not** child abuse, the PCPO will deal with the matter in accordance with Rugby Ontario's disciplinary procedures. Pending the outcome of any investigation conducted by a Discipline Panel, precautionary suspension will be considered if there is significant concern about the conduct of the individual towards children.

7.9.6 If the Initial Assessment gives reasonable cause to suspect or believe possible child abuse, the PCPO will immediately refer the concerns to the Police and/or Social Services. The PCPO will make a written record of the name and position/rank of the social worker or the police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call in case any follow-up is required. Referrals to the Police and/or Social Services will be confirmed in writing by the PCPO within one (1) day. A copy of the document reporting the incident will be provided to the Police and/or Social Services on request.

7.9.7 The PCPO will obtain advice from the Police and/or Social Services on whether or not to inform the named individual that a report has been received which may suggest an

allegation of abuse. The action taken will ensure that evidence is preserved for any criminal proceedings while at the same time safeguarding the rights of the named individual.

7.9.8 Precautionary suspension in the initial assessment phase **is not a form of disciplinary action**. Any formal suspension will be carried out by Rugby Ontario in accordance with its disciplinary procedures. At the suspension interview, the named individual will be informed of the reason for suspension (within the confines of sharing information) and given the opportunity to make a statement. Notification of the suspension and the reasons will be conveyed in writing to the named individual in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.

7.9.9 Following advice from the police, cases involving a criminal investigation will not preclude disciplinary action being taken provided that (a) sufficient information is available to enable the PCPO to make a decision; and (b) it does not jeopardize any criminal investigation.

7.9.10 In the exceptional circumstance that an investigation establishes an allegation is false, unfounded or malicious:

- (i) The named individual will receive an account of the circumstances and/or investigation and a letter confirming the conclusion of the matter.
- (ii) The PCPO will take all reasonable steps to support the individual in this situation.
- (iii) Rugby Ontario will review the child's participation in rugby.

7.9.11 All media enquiries relating to the conduct of a club member or volunteer with regard to children will be referred to the CEO.

8.0 HEARING PROCEDURES

8.1 Set-Up

8.1.1 A Respondent may request an in-person hearing through the Judicial Officer who will determine whether or not to expend the extra costs associated with holding such a hearing. If the Judicial Officer decides that one is required, the hearing shall take place in private and at a venue which is suitable for the matters at hand; otherwise, it will be held via a conference call.

8.1.2 A Discipline Panel must consist of a minimum of three (3) members who have had no prior involvement with the events leading up to the alleged misconduct. The Judicial Officer may be a panel member.

8.1.3 If not already pre-determined as the Judicial Officer, the relevant Discipline Director must appoint a Chair of the Discipline Panel.

8.1.4 The Chair will appoint one of the other two Panel members to act as Secretary and be responsible for taking the minutes of the hearing.

8.1.5 Notwithstanding 8.1.3 and 8.1.4 above, a Discipline Panel for all Match Official abuse cases must include three (3) members of the Discipline, Investigations and Appeals Committee, one of whom will be the Chair.

8.2 Notification and Postponement

8.2.1 All parties required to attend a Hearing must be notified in writing two (2) days in advance of the scheduled date.

8.2.2 Any party required to attend a Hearing may request one (1) postponement by submitting a written request which must be received by the Judicial Officer within one (1) day of the notification being sent and include the rationale for the postponement.

8.2.3 Within one (1) day of receiving the request, the Judicial Officer will make a ruling and, if granted, will notify all affected parties of the new date for the Hearing.

8.2.4 If criminal charges are laid as a result of any incident that occurred under the jurisdiction of Rugby Ontario, the Hearing shall proceed in accordance with Rugby Ontario's approved policies and procedures unless the respondent or the Hearing Panel requests a postponement. If the request is granted, the respondent may be suspended from all rugby-related activities until such time as the case is dealt with by the Discipline Panel.

8.3 Attendance

8.3.1 The respondent or designated representative must attend the Hearing. A representative must provide a signed proxy from the respondent before being allowed to participate at a hearing.

8.3.2 A respondent may be accompanied by another adult who may act as an adviser.

8.3.3 A respondent who is less than 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult who shall act as an adviser, failing which the Hearing will not precede and the respondent will be suspended until it is held.

8.3.4 In the case of alleged match official abuse, the following must attend the Hearing:

- (i) The respondent (representation by proxy is not permitted);
- (ii) The person(s) submitting the report(s); and

(iii) The Club Official.

8.3.5 The Hearing will not be invalidated by the absence of:

- (i) the Match Official or Complainant provided that the report or complaint is available; or
- (ii) any other interested person who received notification.

8.3.6 If the respondent does not appear at the Hearing, it will not proceed and the respondent will be suspended from all rugby-related activities until such time as he/she requests and attends a rescheduled Hearing.

8.3.7 **Advisers** – These are persons 18 years or older who provide advice to any party required to attend a Hearing including the Discipline Panel. They must not:

- (i) act as witnesses nor provide testimony at the Hearing;
- (ii) question the competence of the match official but, with the permission of the Chair, may seek clarification of statements made.

8.3.8 **Observers** – Each party required to attend the Hearing is entitled to have a maximum of two (2) observers in attendance in order to ensure that the respondent receives a fair hearing. Observers must not act as witnesses nor provide testimony but may speak with the permission of the Chair. If these conditions are not followed, the Chair holds the right to remove the observer from the Hearing and suspend proceedings until such time as the observer leaves.

8.3.9 **Witnesses** – At the sole discretion of the Chair, witnesses may be excluded until they are called to give evidence. Through the Chair, any Discipline Panel member may question them. There is no limit to the number of witnesses allowed but they must add new testimony. The Discipline Panel may restrict the testimony if it becomes repetitious.

8.4 Evidence and Standard of Proof

8.4.1 If the report or complaint has not been previously provided to all invited parties, the Report or the Complaint will be read by the Chair.

8.4.2 The Chair will be entitled to receive such evidence and in such form as is deemed fit (including verbal, written or audio visual evidence).

8.4.3 Through the Chair, the Match Official or Complainant may be questioned for clarification by any Panel Member.

8.4.4 Each respondent may make statements in defence. Through the Chair, the respondent may be questioned for clarification by any Panel Member.

8.4.5 Character evidence may be received and taken into account but will only be relevant in determining the sanction.

8.4.6 If an alleged offender has been sanctioned in rugby discipline proceedings within the previous three (3) years, details may be received in evidence but will only be relevant in determining the sanction.

8.4.7 The standard of proof on all evidence heard by Discipline Directors, Judicial Officers, Discipline Panels and Appeal Panels will be the balance of probabilities.

8.4.8 Generally, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer will follow the rule of best evidence. This means that first-hand accounts from persons present at the Hearing as to their observations of the incident in question will be preferred to hearsay evidence.

8.4.9 Hearsay evidence will be accepted. However, caution must be exercised before it is accepted in preference to first-hand accounts and, generally, it will be given less weight.

8.4.10 As a general rule, opinion evidence will not be accepted other than recognizing that it is an expert opinion. Expert opinions will only be accepted when the evidence falls outside the everyday knowledge of the Judicial Officer or Discipline Panel as, for example, in the case of a medical opinion.

8.4.11 It is important to note that the above paragraphs relating to Standard of Proof have been written to preserve the Match Official's responsibility to be "the sole judge of fact and of Law during a match", as stated [*in Law 6.5.a in the World Rugby Laws of the Game*](#). Any decision by a Match Official during a match must not be affected by a ruling of a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer. However, a distinction may be drawn between a Match Official's decision on the field of play and the reasons for that decision. Thus, in considering further disciplinary action for an incident in which the Match Official has already made a decision on the field in relation to that incident, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer may, nevertheless, inquire into the Match Official's reasons for the decision and the circumstances surrounding it. In doing so, the Discipline Panel or the Judicial Officer must ensure that great care is taken to not revise the decision nor cast doubt upon the Match Official's responsibilities under the Laws of the Game.

8.4.12 In considering an incident of alleged illegal and/or of foul play, a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer may impose a sanction in accordance with the provisions of Section 8.5 or, if mitigating factors are sufficiently compelling, may decide to take no further action.

8.4.13 In the case of a Send-Off, the function of the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer is to consider the circumstances of the case and to determine what further sanction, if any, should be imposed on the respondent. If the respondent seeks to show that the Match Official's reasons for the decision were wrong, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer *may*,

subject always to the caveat expressed in paragraph 8.4.11 above, review the Match Official's reasons for the Send-Off and the circumstances surrounding it. In any such case, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer will not make a finding contrary to the Match Official's decision unless it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the Match Official's reasons for the decision were wrong.

8.4.14 In cases where a Match Official reports misconduct that he/she deems to constitute physical or verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or harassment other than that dealt with by a Send-Off, the standard of proof applied to the incident will be the same as that applied in the case of a Send-Off (i.e. the Match Official's decision to deem the matter as misconduct will be accepted, subject to the *reasons* for doing so being open to examination).

8.4.15 While all Match Officials are deemed to be guests of the Home Club for at least one hour before and after the match in question and, as such, are deemed to be going about their appointed or expected duties during that time, the Discipline Director or Judicial Officer may take into account other probabilities that may arise in a social environment accompanied by alcohol at any time more than one (1) hour after a match has ended. In cases where several clubs share a common ground and where Match Officials may be on duty for more than one match, the Discipline Director or Judicial Officer will adjust this "guest time" factor of one (1) hour according to the circumstances of the day.

8.4.16 In cases of misconduct reported by an individual other than the Match Official, the standard of proof will be based on the balance of probabilities.

8.5 Determination of Sanctions

8.5.1 If an offender has been sanctioned multiple times in the previous five years, the Discipline Panel may deem the individual to be a ***persistent offender*** and will generally take this into account when determining the sanction.

(i) if the offender has been sanctioned once in the previous five years for an offence other than the one for which they are currently being sanctioned, the Discipline Panel shall add a loading of 50% to the current sanction.

(ii) if the offender has been sanctioned twice in the previous five years for an offence(s) other than the one for which they are currently being sanctioned, the Discipline Panel shall add a loading of 75% to the current sanction.

(iii) if the offender has been sanctioned three times in the previous five years for an offence(s) other than the one for which they are currently being sanctioned, the Discipline Panel shall add a loading of 100% to the current sanction.

(iv) if the offender has been sanctioned more than three times in the previous five years, they shall be additionally charged and sanctioned under Sanction 6.2 "Acted in a manner deemed detrimental to the game". Any sanction imposed here, shall be in addition to any other sanction applied.

8.5.2 After the presentations, the Discipline Panel will review the evidence and determine the sanctions, if any, to be imposed **in camera**. Any sanction imposed will be in accordance with the *Schedule of Sanctions* listed in Appendix A.

8.5.3 All parties involved in the Hearing will receive its findings and decision but only Rugby Ontario and, if relevant, the Branch Union will receive the minutes.

8.5.4 After a decision is reached, the Chair of the Discipline Panel or an authorized representative in the RO Office will communicate the decision to the Club Official and offender in writing within two (2) days of the Hearing, with copies sent to the relevant Discipline Director, RO Office, Complainant and Members of the Discipline Panel.

8.5.5 Consistent with the [World Rugby Regulation 17.19 – Sanctions and Core Sanctioning Process](#), Rugby Ontario has adopted the [World Rugby Sanctions for Foul Play](#) except where they are:

- (i) silent on offences; or
- (ii) inappropriate to local circumstances; or
- (iii) impractical to enforce from an administrative standpoint.

In such cases, Rugby Ontario has drafted new sanctions or increased the sanctions listed in Appendix 1 of Regulation 17.

8.5.6 Rugby Ontario accepts that the structure of the schedule of World Rugby sanctions (i.e. Lower End, Mid-Range, Top End and Maximum Sanctions) allows some discretion to the Judicial Officer or Discipline Panel in imposing sanctions while still supporting their intent.

8.5.7 When imposing sanctions dealing with a send-off, Discipline Panels or Judicial Officers will first assess the seriousness of the offender's conduct. When a player has been sent off following two (2) yellow cards, the more serious offence will be considered. The assessment will be determined by reference to the following features of offence:

- a. it was intentional, that is, committed wilfully or deliberately;
- b. it was reckless, that is, the offender knew or should have known that there was a risk of committing an act of Illegal and/or foul play;
- c. the gravity of the offender's actions in relation to the offence:
 - the nature of the actions or manner in which the offence was committed, including which part of the body was used (e.g. fist, elbow, knee, boot, hand, shoulder);
 - the existence of provocation and whether or not the offender acted in retaliation and/or self-defence.
- d. the effect of the offender's actions on the victim (e.g. the extent of injury, removal from the match);

- e. the vulnerability of the victim, including the part of the victim's body involved, the position of the victim, the victim's expectancy of contact or ability to defend himself or herself;
- f. the level of the offender's participation in the offence and degree of premeditation;
- g. whether the misconduct was completed or amounted largely to an attempt to offend (e.g. by swinging a fist and missing);
- h. any other feature relevant to the offence, including the effect of the player's actions on the match.

8.5.8 Based on an assessment of the offence under consideration against the above features, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer will then categorize the offence as being at the lower end, mid-range or top end of the scale of seriousness of offending and will identify the entry point for the offence where set out in the *Schedule of Sanctions*.

8.5.9 The following "plain language" descriptions may be used as a guide by the Chair of a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer to assist in categorizing behaviour. However, they are descriptions, not definitions and do not comprise an exhaustive list.

- (i) **Unfair Play:** obstruction, interference, holding, delay of game, deliberately throwing the ball into touch, throwing or kicking the ball away after the whistle, repeated infringements, conduct contrary to the spirit of the Game.
- (ii) **Potentially Dangerous Play:** collapsing a scrum, ruck, or maul; early, late or "sling" tackles; illegal contact with another player with a low risk of personal injury (e.g. tripping, treading on the body of a player, fighting, elbowing, wrestling, hair grabbing).
- (iii) **Dangerous Play:** high tackles, forceful use of the boot or knee, prolonged fighting, premeditated punching, charging, trampling an opponent on the body).
- (iv) **Violent Play:** stamping on an opponent near or on the head, trampling, kicking an opponent on the ground, head butting, eye gouging, biting, "sucker" punching, stiff arm or spear tackle.

8.5.10 Having identified the applicable entry point for consideration of a particular incident, a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer will then identify all aggravating factors and determine what additional period of suspension, if any, above the applicable entry point for the offence will apply to the case in question. Aggravating factors include the following:

- (i) an absence or lack of remorse and/or contrition on the part of the offender;
- (ii) the offender's status as a persistent offender (refer to Sections 8.4.6 and 8.5.1);
- (iii) any other off-field aggravating factor that the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer considers relevant or appropriate.

8.5.11 Thereafter, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer will identify all relevant mitigating factors and determine if there are grounds for reducing the period of suspension. Mitigating factors include:

- (i) the presence and timing of an acknowledgement of culpability or guilt by the offender;
- (ii) a previously good discipline record and evidence of good character;
- (iii) the age and experience of the offender;
- (iv) the offender's conduct prior to and at the Hearing;
- (v) any demonstration of remorse for the offender's action and of sympathy for the victim;
- (vi) any other off-field mitigating factor that the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer considers relevant or appropriate.

8.5.12 Discipline Panels and Judicial Officers will, in their written decisions set out:

- (i) the reasoning for their findings, including the finding on culpability, be it wilful or reckless;
- (ii) how they have categorized the seriousness of the offence by reference to the standard features of offence;
- (iii) how they applied aggravating and mitigating factors; and
- (iv) in conclusion, the details of the sanction imposed, if any.

8.5.13 The details of the sanction must include:

- (i) The Start Date – for send-off offences, it is the date when the offence was committed except, if an offender was allowed to play pending a Hearing, then it is the date of the Hearing. For other offences, it is the date of the Hearing.
- (ii) The End Date – calculated by taking the start date as the first day of the sanction.
- (iii) The nature of the sanction – including being suspended from a particular discipline of rugby or from all rugby-related activities.

8.5.14 Notwithstanding the above provisions, Judicial Officers or Discipline Panels may, at their sole discretion:

- (i) defer the start date; or
- (ii) introduce a grace period in the sanction period when the sanction will not apply.

8.5.15 The provisions of paragraph 8.5.14 above may be used when the sanction period starts or ends after the end of the offender's normal season. The start date may defer to the start of the next season. Likewise, if the sanction extends beyond the end of the offender's normal season, a grace period may be introduced with the balance of the sanction being applied at the start of the next season. For guidance, the end of an offender's season may be taken as the last league or cup match of the team for which the

offender normally plays. The start of the next season may be taken first league match of the team for which the offender normally plays. When the start date is deferred or a grace period is introduced, the offender is not restricted by the terms of the sanction before the start date or during the grace period.

8.5.16 In cases where the misconduct resulted in serious consequences to the physical or mental health of the victim, the Judicial Officer or Discipline Panel may impose any greater period of suspension, including a suspension for life.

8.5.17 If deemed appropriate, a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer may require an offender to write a letter of apology to the victim of the misconduct. If so, the offender must do so to the satisfaction of the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer before any suspension is lifted.

8.5.18 Where the conduct of a registrant or Member in matters of serious consequence has come before a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer on two occasions or more in one (1) calendar year or on any further occasion in the three (3) calendar years following the second or subsequent occasion, a Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer may deem that the offender is a persistent serious offender and will be entitled to impose an immediate suspension from all rugby-related activities which will take precedent over any other sanctions imposed.

8.5.19 In the matter of a suspended player coming into Ontario from another jurisdiction, Rugby Ontario may make allowance for the different playing seasons of the other jurisdiction. In the matter of a suspended player moving away from Ontario, Rugby Ontario will, upon request, forward the player's records, including the record of suspension to the new jurisdiction.

8.5.20 In recognition of the shorter playing season for age grade rugby, the minimum suspension period for send-offs in junior matches may be reduced by up to 50% where deemed appropriate.

8.5.21 When the discipline proceedings have been kept confidential, the Discipline Panel or Judicial Officer will decide whether to publicize the names of each complainant and respondent, the nature of the offence and sanctions imposed, or to withhold their names in order to maintain complete confidentiality. Since it is important that Rugby Ontario be seen to be taking action on complaints of misconduct, this last option will only be used in exceptional cases.

8.6 Harassment Case Review Panels (please also refer to Sections 3.13, 7.8 and 9.2)

8.6.1 The Case Review Panel will convene the Hearing in a timely manner. It will meet the following requirements and other procedures that the Panel may decide:

- (i) The complainant and respondent are given 14 days written notice of its date, time and place;
- (ii) Panel members select a Chair from among themselves;
- (iii) A quorum will be all three Panel members;
- (iv) Decisions will be by majority vote. If a majority vote decision is not possible, the decision of the Chair will be the Panel's decision.
- (v) The Hearing will be held in camera.
- (vi) Both parties must be present to give evidence and to answer the Panel's questions. The questioning of witnesses by the respondent and complainant will be at the discretion of the Panel.
- (vii) If the complainant does not appear, the matter will be dismissed unless the complainant decides not to make a formal complaint but the PHO concluded that the evidence and surrounding circumstances are such as to require a formal written complaint. If the respondent does not appear, the Hearing will proceed.
- (viii) The complainant and respondent may be accompanied by a representative or advisor and, where necessary, by a translator.

8.6.2 The PHO may attend the Hearing at the request of the Panel.

8.6.3 Within 30 days of the Hearing, the Panel will present its findings in a report to the CEO and, if applicable, their designate, which will contain:

- (i) A summary of the relevant facts;
- (ii) A determination as to whether or not the alleged incident constitutes harassment as defined by Rugby Ontario's policy;
- (iii) Recommended disciplinary action against the respondent, if the incident is deemed to constitute harassment; and
- (iv) Recommended measures to remedy or mitigate the harm of loss suffered by the complainant, if the acts constitute harassment.

If the CEO and/or their designate is involved in the complaint, the PHO's report will be submitted to the Secretary of Rugby Ontario or any other Officer not involved in the complaint.

8.6.4 If the Panel determines that the allegations of harassment are false, vexatious, retaliatory or unfounded, its report must recommend disciplinary action against the complainant.

8.6.5 The CEO, or their designate, will, as soon as practicable, send by email to both the complainant and the respondent, a letter outlining the Case Review Panel's report and the decision of Rugby Ontario.

8.6.6 When determining appropriate disciplinary action and corrective measures, the Panel will consider factors such as:

- (i) The nature of the harassment;
- (ii) Whether or not it involved any physical contact;
- (iii) Whether or not it was an isolated incident or part of an ongoing pattern;
- (iv) The nature of the relationship between complainant and offender;
- (v) The age of the complainant;
- (vi) Whether or not the offender had been involved in previous harassment incidents;
- (vii) Whether or not the offender admitted responsibility and expressed a willingness to change; and
- (viii) Whether or not the offender retaliated against the complainant.

8.6.7 In recommending disciplinary actions, the Panel may consider the options listed in Table 7 – Standard Penalties for Harassment Incidents.

8.6.8 Where the investigation does not result in a finding of harassment, a copy of the Panel's report will be filed with Rugby Ontario. It will be kept confidential with access restricted to the Officers of Rugby Ontario, the CEO and PHOs.

8.6.9 Where the investigation results in a finding of harassment, a copy of the Panel's report will be placed in the official membership file of the offender. Unless the findings of the Panel are overturned upon appeal, this report will be retained for a period of 10 years unless new circumstances dictate that it is kept for a longer period.

9.0 Appeals and Pardons

Policy

9.1 Discipline Panel/Judicial Officer Decisions

9.1.1 Depending on the nature of the infraction or misconduct, the following Appellants may appeal a decision or, prior to a decision being reached, may appeal the time elapsed to reach a decision:

- (i) Any alleged offender who has been sanctioned or is under investigation and who is not represented by a Member;
- (ii) The Member to which the alleged offender belongs;
- (iii) The Referees' Society that appointed the Match Official;
- (iv) The Member or other rugby organization that has been sanctioned, or is under investigation;
- (v) Rugby Ontario.

9.1.2 A decision may only be appealed on the grounds of:

- (i) Evidence or information that was unknown or unavailable to the Appellant or the Discipline Panel/Judicial Officer when the decision was made; or
- (ii) Failure to handle the reported infraction/misconduct in accordance with the established procedures indicated in this Manual

Procedures

9.1.3 The Appeal must:

- (i) Be sent by e-mail to the CEO who will determine if it is to be forwarded to the President of the Branch Union that had jurisdiction over the original decision;
- (ii) Be received within five (5) days of being notified of the original decision.
- (iii) Include a certified cheque, cash or money order payable to Rugby Ontario for \$100. However, if an appeal is received from a Referees' Society on the grounds of gross misconduct or from Rugby Ontario where the safety of its members is considered to be at risk by a failure to impose appropriate sanctions or conditions of membership, there will be no charge.
- (iv) All, some or none of this fee will be returned at the discretion of the Appeals Committee.

9.1.4 The CEO, or their designate, immediately upon receipt of the Appeal, will establish an Appeals Committee consisting of three (3) persons, one of whom will be appointed to the Chair. If possible, this Committee should consist of current or former Directors of Rugby Ontario, or current or former Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Branch Unions but must exclude anyone involved in the original incident or the rendering of the decision.

9.1.5 The Appeals Committee will:

- (i) prior to considering the Appeal, obtain a report of the incident, all related information, record of proceedings and the decision;
- (ii) if the Appellant requests a Hearing or the Appeals Committee decides that a Hearing is appropriate, notify all involved parties of the time and place of the Hearing and give them the opportunity to respond to any new information or arguments presented.
- (iii) advise the procedures to be followed for the Hearing;
- (iv) after considering the written appeal and any presentations, render its decision.

9.1.6 Unless (a) an error in fact or in application of the correct procedures has been demonstrated; or (b) new information has been presented which was not available at the

time of the original decision for reasons beyond the control of the Appellant, the Appeals Committee will uphold the original decision.

9.1.7 In its deliberations, the standard of proof on all evidence heard by the Appeal Committee will be the balance of probabilities.

9.1.8 If an error has been demonstrated or new information presented, the Appeals Committee may uphold or reverse the original decision, or may increase or decrease the sanctions imposed in accordance with the Schedule of Sanctions in Appendix A.

9.1.9 The Chair of the Appeals Committee will:

- (i) communicate its decision to the CEO and/or their designate;
- (ii) send the summary of the Hearing (if any) and its decision to the CEO and/or their designate for retention.

9.1.10 The CEO or their designate will advise:

- (i) the Appellant with written confirmation, within one (1) day, the decision of the Appeals Committee;
- (ii) the Chair of the relevant Rugby Ontario Committee and Branch Union President.

9.1.11 Until such time as the Appeals Committee renders its decision, the original decision will stand.

9.1.12 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

9.2 Harassment Case Review Panel Decisions **(Please also refer to Sections 3.13, 7.8 and 8.6)**

Policy

9.2.1 Both the complainant and offender have the right to appeal the decision and recommendations of a Case Review Panel. A notice of intention to appeal, along with grounds for the appeal, must be provided to the CEO within the prescribed time period of the complainant or offender receiving the Panel's report.

9.2.2 The CEO will have the discretion to accept an appeal that was not lodged within the prescribed time period.

9.2.3 Permissible grounds for an appeal are:

- (i) The Panel did not follow the procedures laid out in the Harassment policy;
- (ii) One or more Panel members were influenced by bias; or

- (iii) The Panel reached a decision which was grossly unfair or unreasonable.

Procedures

9.2.4 The CEO, or their designate, immediately upon receipt of the Appeal, will establish an Appeals Committee consisting of three (3) persons, one of whom will be appointed to the Chair. Committee membership will include both genders. If possible, the members should be current or former Directors of Rugby Ontario, or current or former Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Branch Unions but must have no significant personal or professional involvement with either the complainant or offender and no prior involvement in the Harassment complaint.

9.2.5 The Appeals Committee will base its decision solely on a review of the following:

- (i) Complainant's and Offender's statements;
- (ii) PHO and Case Review Panel Report;
- (iii) Notice of Appeal

In its deliberations, the standard of proof on all evidence heard by the Appeals Committee will be the balance of probabilities.

9.2.6 Within 10 days of its appointment, the Chair of the Appeals Committee will present its findings in a report to the CEO, or their designate.

9.2.7 The Appeals Committee has the authority to:

- (i) Uphold the decision of the Case Review Panel;
- (ii) Reverse the decision of the Case Review Panel; or
- (iii) Modify any of the Case Review Panel's recommendations for disciplinary action or remedial measures.

9.2.8 A copy of Appeals Committee report will be provided by the CEO or their designate, within 15 days to the complainant and offender.

9.2.9 The decision of the Appeals Committee will be final.

9.2.10 The prescribed time period referred to in 9.2.1 is 30 days.

9.3 Board, Board Committee and RO Office Decisions

Policy

9.3.1 A Member may appeal to the Members, by way of a Special General Meeting (SGM) pursuant to Section 3.2 of the By-Laws, a decision of the Board; or of a Board Committee

and the RO Office that is made on behalf of the Board provided that the appeal is received by the CEO within 60 days of when the decision was made and is accompanied by a fee of \$500 or such other amount as the Board may determine.

9.3.2 The appeal must clearly identify:

- (i) The Member appealing the decision
- (ii) The decision being appealed;
- (iii) The grounds that the appeal is based on; and
- (iv) The documentation supporting the appeal.

9.3.3 The decision being appealed must **not** involve:

- (i) The imposition of a fine or levy of under \$1,000 or such other amount as the Board may determine from time to time; or
- (ii) The implementation or enforcement of provisions contained in preceding sections of this Manual.

Procedures

9.3.4 Within 10 days of receiving the appeal, the CEO will call a SGM in accordance with the By-Laws and will send one copy of each Notice of Appeal together with all supporting documentation submitted by the appellant to all other affected parties.

9.3.5 The SGM will consider the appeals by providing a reasonable opportunity, consistent with fairness and natural justice, for affected parties to be heard and to hear the evidence considered at the time of the original decision and any other relevant information.

9.3.6 The SGM may reverse or amend the decision of the Board, Board Committee or RO Office as it sees fit through a Special Resolution (which requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast); otherwise it remains binding.

9.3.7 If the appeal is successful, up to \$250 of the fee submitted by the appellant will be refunded.

9.3.8 If no decision is made by the SGM, or if there is no quorum at the commencement of the meeting, the original decision will be deemed to have been confirmed.

9.4 Pardons

Policy

9.4.1 On written request from an individual who has received a severe sanction from a Harassment Case Review Panel or Discipline Panel and provided that at least one (1) year

has elapsed since the commencement of the sanction, the Board may, at its own discretion, consider a review of the sanctions imposed.

Procedures

9.4.2 Upon direction from the Board, the CEO will appoint a Pardon Committee consisting of three (3) persons, one of whom will be appointed to the Chair. Committee membership will include both genders. If possible, the members should be current or former Directors of Rugby Ontario, or current or former Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Branch Unions but must have no significant personal or professional involvement with either the complainant or offender and no prior involvement in the complaint.

9.4.3 Within 15 days of its appointment, the Pardon Committee will present its findings in a report to the CEO who will refer it to the Board. The Committee has the authority to recommend changes to lessen the sanctions currently in place.

9.4.4 The Board will accept, reject or vary the recommendations of the Pardon Committee and issue a report which will be the final decision of Rugby Ontario.

9.4.5 A copy of Rugby Ontario's final report will be provided, without delay, to the complainant and offender.

10.0 COMMITTEES

Policy

10.1 Non-Board Committees

Non-Board Committees deal with program implementation and operational effectiveness. The CEO may establish such committees where deemed appropriate. The CEO or their delegate provides the necessary liaison and assistance to facilitate the work of each committee. These committees, which are advisory, report directly to the CEO. Unless authorized by the CEO, a committee may not exercise authority over any assigned staff member.

Procedures

10.2 Membership Process

The CEO determines Non-Board Committee Chairs and Members, as follows:

- (i) Chairs - The CEO appoints the Chairs

- (ii) Committee Members - Committee Members are appointed by the Committee Chair and the CEO.

11.0 FINANCE

Policy

11.1 Disbursements

11.1.1 All persons appointed or elected to represent Rugby Ontario (Board, Committee Members, representative team officials, other volunteers) are entitled to claim expenses incurred in their duties. Eligible expenses are determined through the Rugby Ontario Disbursements Chart.

11.1.2 Where a person receives an honorarium for their duties that is intended cover any expenses incurred, they shall not be entitled to claim any expenses.

11.2 Rugby Ontario Disbursements

RUGBY ONTARIO	DISBURSEMENTS CHART
Accommodation	May, at the discretion of the CEO, be paid for claimants who live more than 150 km (one way) from a meeting or event. This policy does not apply to Annual or Special Meetings but may be waived by the CEO for exceptional circumstances (e.g. bad weather). If possible, accommodation is to be booked by the Office.
Travel	Where eligible for travel disbursements, claimants must use the most economical method of transportation (approved by the CEO): <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Economy air, bus, rental car or rail fare. If possible, travel is to be booked by the Office.(ii) rate per km, as determined for time to time by the CEO, for all trips by automobile (i.e. regardless of length)
Meals	Per Diems will be based on the following schedule up to a maximum of \$80.00: <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) Breakfast \$20.00(ii) Lunch \$20.00(iii) Dinner \$40.00

11.2.1 Expenses must be promptly claimed after the termination of the event or function on the Rugby Ontario Expense Statement. Details or explanations should be understandable to the reviewer and to any third party outsider, demonstrating clearly that the expenses are business related and justifiable. All receipts (including meals, taxi, hotel, and parking) must be attached to the expense claim.

11.2.2 Accommodations should be comfortably equipped and conveniently located. Office staff should use their discretion when booking accommodations. Exceptions are allowed if the hotel is pre-selected (e.g. for a conference or representative team). Where appropriate, rooms will be booked based on two persons per room.

11.2.3 The Office is responsible for monitoring program expenses, identifying any financial impacts, providing accurate forecasts and explaining any budget variances. Expenses not claimed within 60 days may not be paid.

11.2.4 Rugby Ontario endeavors to pay invoices on a timely basis in accordance with its cash management strategy. Invoices and expense forms submitted by Rugby Ontario personnel should be processed within thirty (30) days.

11.3 Petty Cash

Policy

11.3.1 Cash advances will be allowed only when it is not feasible to use a debit/credit card or invoice Rugby Ontario.

Procedure

11.3.2 This practice should be kept to a minimum (e.g. for managers of representative teams in travel status who may be provided with a cash advance). In such instances, the expenses must be submitted and any adjustments to the initial advance reconciled within thirty (30) days after the event requiring the advance has ended.

12.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

Policy

12.1 General

Although the By-Laws authorize the Board to “employ or engage under contract such persons as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Corporation”, they provide no direction on the terms and conditions of their employment, nor what authorities have been delegated by the Board to its Human Resources Committee or the CEO. Also, the Ontario Health and Safety Act and the subsequent amendment addressing Violence and Harassment

in the Workplace places responsibility for workplace safety on the Employer (i.e. the Board). To address this responsibility, the Board has adopted the following delegations:

12.2 Delegation to the Human Resources Committee

The Committee is authorized to handle human resource matters concerning the working environment of Rugby Ontario's professional staff on behalf of the Board, on the understanding that it will:

- (i) seek the Board's approval/direction on matters having potential financial (excluding compensation) or liability impacts; or
- (ii) otherwise keeping the Board informed as appropriate.

12.3 Delegation to the CEO

The CEO is responsible for maintaining the Human Resources Manual detailing the management of human resources in the Office on the understanding that:

- (i) matters (such as those stemming from new provincial legislation or Ministry policies) which have potential financial or liability impacts, or implications for the way in which Board members should interact with the professional staff, will be brought to the Committee's attention for direction or guidance as appropriate; and
- (ii) The Human Resources Manual will be subject to periodic review by Rugby Ontario's lawyer.

13.0 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Policy

13.1 It is in the best interest of Rugby Ontario to be aware of and properly manage all conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict of interest. This Conflict of Interest Policy is designed to help Directors, Officers, Staff, Registrants and Volunteers of Rugby Ontario and its Members identify situations that present potential conflicts of interest and to provide Rugby Ontario with a procedure to appropriately manage conflicts in accordance with legal requirements and the goals of accountability and transparency in Rugby Ontario's operation.

A conflict of interest may exist when the interests or potential interests of any Director, Officer, Staff, Registrant, Volunteer or that person's close relative, or any individual, group, or organization to which the person associated with Rugby Ontario or its Members has allegiance, may be seen as competing with the interests of Rugby Ontario or its Members, or may impair such person's independence or loyalty to Rugby Ontario or its Members. A conflict of interest is defined as an interest that might affect, or might reasonably appear to affect, the judgment or conduct of any Director, Officer, staff member, registrant or volunteer in a manner that is adverse to the interests of Rugby Ontario or its Members.

This policy is not designed to eliminate relationships and activities that may create a duality of interest, but to require the disclosure of any conflicts of interest and the adherence to the policies and provisions relating to conflict of interest outlined in this Manual.

Appendix A
Schedule of Sanctions Guidelines

Table 1 – Standard Penalties for Non-Compliance with Administrative Requirements by Members

Type	Description	First seasonal infraction	Second seasonal infraction	Third and subsequent seasonal infraction
1.1	Late submission of Tour Approval Form	\$100	\$250	\$500
1.2	Late submission of Serious Injury Notification Report	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.3	Unavailable or incomplete Emergency Action Plan	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.4	Non-compliance with World Rugby Concussion Management Guidelines	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.5	Non-compliance with mandatory medical personnel and equipment requirements	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.6	Failure to meet Playing Surface requirements	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.7	Failure to meet Jersey, Game Sheet or Score Reporting Administration requirements	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.8	Failure to provide a Club match official when required by Rugby Ontario	written warning	\$100	\$500
1.9	Failure to provide Police Record Checks when requested	\$100	\$250	\$500
1.10	Club with three or more players sent off in one match	\$100	\$250	\$500
1.11	Club with players who are repeatedly reported for misconduct in one season	\$100	\$250	\$500
1.12	Incidents of Match Official Abuse as listed in Table 4 by its registrants or spectators	Up to \$500	\$100 - \$1000	\$500 - \$2000
1.13	Failure by a home club to take appropriate action to eliminate Match Official abuse as listed in Table 4 from the sidelines	Up to \$750	Up to \$1500 + one match suspension for the offending team	\$500 - \$2000 + \$3000 bond for 2 seasons plus expulsion of the offending team from the league for remainder of season
1.14	Participation by a player or coach who is unregistered or without transfer approval in a sanctioned match	Forfeiture of match and the club is fined \$500 for each unregistered/unapproved participant		
1.15	Participation by a player who does not meet established eligibility requirements in a sanctioned match	Forfeiture of match and the club is fined \$100 for each ineligible player		
1.16	Match default by a 1 st team in the Marshall and Ontario Women's Leagues	\$500 for each default and both the 1 st and 2 nd teams will be automatically relegated at the end of the season		

1.17	Match default by a 2 nd team in the Marshall and Ontario Women's Leagues. (Refer to 5.1.22(iii) for exemptions)	\$300 for each default and, for 2 or more defaults, both the 1 st and 2 nd teams will be automatically relegated at the end of the season
1.18	Match defaults in McCormick Cup, Fall Cup, OWL Cup and Intermediate Cup matches	Up to \$1000 and suspension from the following year's competition

Table 2 – Standard Penalties for Non-Compliance with Administrative Requirements by Registrants
In all instances, the longer of the two options of days or matches is applicable.

Type	Description	First seasonal infraction	Second seasonal infraction	Third and subsequent seasonal infractions
2.1	Coaching, officiating or playing while unregistered or without transfer approval in a sanctioned match	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches	240 days or 32 matches
2.2	Coaching, officiating or playing while suspended or ineligible	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches	120 days or 16 matches
2.3	Team Coach or Manager allowing participation in a sanctioned match by a player who is suspended	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches	120 days or 16 matches
2.4	Participating in a rugby activity under a false name	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches	120 days or 16 matches
2.5	Match Official failing to fulfil a confirmed appointment without giving 24 hours notice	Written warning	\$100-\$250	\$250-\$500
2.6	Match Official failing to submit an <i>Incident Report</i> or <i>Send Off Report</i> as per the prescribed process	written warning	\$100-\$250	\$250-\$500
2.7	Failure to attend a discipline hearing requested by the registrant.	Suspension from all rugby-related activities until the case review has been completed by review or hearing + \$100		

Table 3 – Standard Penalties for Player Send-Offs or Player Citings other than for Abuse of Match Officials

In all instances, the longer of the two options of days or matches is applicable.

For possible exceptions to length of suspension - see Note 1

Type	Description of Send-Off	First offence (life time)	Second offence (life time)	Third or subsequent offence (life time)
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3.1	Unfair play with no risk of personal injury including obstruction, interference, holding, delay of game, deliberately throwing the ball into touch, throwing or kicking the ball away after the whistle, repeated infringements, conduct contrary to the spirit of the Game.	9 days or 1 match	16 days or 2 matches	30 days or 4 matches
3.2	Potentially dangerous play including collapsing a scrum, ruck, or maul; early, late or “sling” tackles; and illegal contact with another player with a low risk of personal injury (e.g. tripping, treading on the body of a player, fighting, elbowing, wrestling, hair grabbing).	16 days or 2 matches	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches
3.3	Dangerous play with a high risk of personal injury including high tackles, forceful use of the boot or knee, prolonged fighting, premeditated punching, charging, trampling an opponent on the body).	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches	120 days or 16 matches
3.4	Violent play with a great risk of personal injury including stamping on an opponent near or on the head, trampling, kicking an opponent on the ground, head butting, eye gouging, biting, “sucker” punching, stiff arm or spear tackle).	60 days or 8 matches	120 days or 16 matches	240 days or 32 matches
3.5	Verbal abuse, including, but not limited to abuse based on religion, colour, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation.	30 days or 4 matches	60 days or 8 matches	120 days or 16 matches
3.6	Third suspension for send-offs in the same season	30 - 330 days	n/a	n/a
3.7	Returning to the field after being cited or sent off (in addition to any other sanction imposed)	9 days or 1 match	16 days or 2 matches	30 days or 4 matches

Table 4– Standard Penalties for Abuse of Match Officials by Registrants or Spectators

Type	Description	First offence (life time)	Second offence (life time)	Third or subsequent offence (life time)
4.1	Persistent criticism of a match official, including repeatedly disputing decisions, insulting conduct or remarks on and off the field.	30 - 90 days + \$100	90 – 180 days + \$200	180 days- 1 year + \$500
4.2	Prolonged and/or aggressive verbal abuse of a match official	60 – 120 days + \$200	120 days – 1 year + \$300	1- 3 years + \$500
4.3	Threatening actions or words including spitting or intentional non-violent contact with a match official	180 days – 1 year + \$500	2 years minimum	5 years minimum
4.4	Intentional violent contact with a match official	Life time	n/a	n/a

Table 5 – Standard Penalties for Members, Registrants and Individuals for Other Misconduct (Excluding Harassment Case Review Panel Decisions)

Type	Description	First offence (life time)	Second offence (life time)	Third or subsequent offence (life time)
Registrants and Individuals				
5.1	Acted in a manner deemed detrimental to the game	Up to 180 days	180 days – 2 years	3 years minimum
5.2	Acted in contravention of, or failed to act in accordance with Rugby Ontario policies and procedures	Up to 180 days	180 days – 2 years	3 years minimum
5.3	Public criticism of a Match Official, Member or Rugby Ontario including comments to the media	30 – 90 days	90 – 180 days	1 year minimum
Members				
5.4	If any registrants or individuals associated with the Member is sanctioned under Table 5. Refer also to By-Laws 2.9 & 2.10	Fine and/or 1 year bond of up to \$1000	Fine and/or 2 year bond of up to \$2000	Fine and/or 5 year bond of up to \$5000

Table 6– Standard Penalties for Abuse by a Registrant or Spectators towards other Registrants or Spectators (Excluding Harassment Case Review Panel Decisions)

Type	Description	First offence (life time)	Second offence (life time)	Third or subsequent offence (life time)
6.1	Prolonged and/or aggressive verbal abuse.	60 – 120 days + \$200	120 days – 1 year + \$300	1- 3 years + \$500
6.2	Threatening actions or words including spitting or intentional non-violent contact	180 days – 1 year + \$500	2 years minimum	5 years minimum
6.3	Intentional violent contact	3 years minimum	Lifetime	n/a

Table 7 – Standard Penalties for Members, Registrants and Individuals relating to Harassment Case Review Panel Decisions

Type	Level of Sanction	Application Considerations
7.1	Verbal apology by the offender	To be undertaken within 7 days of notification of the sanction. Confirmation to be provided in writing to the RO office that the apology has been offered.

7.2	Written apology by the offender with a copy to RO	To be provided within 7 days of notification of the sanction.
7.3	Written apology by the offender's Club with a copy to RO	To be provided within 7 days of notification of the sanction.
7.4	Letter of reprimand from RO to the offender	To be provided within 7 days of notification of the sanction.
7.5	Letter of reprimand from RO to the Member with whom the offender is registered	To be provided within 7 days of notification of the sanction.
7.6	Offender required to complete either the Respect in Sport for Activity Leaders or Respect in Sport for Parents online training program.	The Certificate of Completion to be provided to the RO office within 30 days of notification of the sanction.
7.7	Offender required to undergo community service in an identified rugby development program(s)	Minimum 5 hours Maximum 50 hours
7.8(a)	Fine or levy to offender	1 st offence - Fine and/or 1 year bond of up to \$1,000
		2 nd offence - Fine and/or 2 year bond of up to \$2,000
		3 rd or subsequent offence - Fine and/or 5 year bond of up to \$5,000
7.8(b)	Fine or levy to the Member with whom the offender is registered/associated	1 st offence - Fine and/or 1 year bond of up to \$1,000
		2 nd offence - Fine and/or 2 year bond of up to \$2,000
		3 rd or subsequent offence - Fine and/or 5 year bond of up to \$5,000
7.9	Referral of the offender to professional counselling	Offender to confirm to the RO office within 30 days of notification of the sanction that counselling has been organized.
7.10	Removal of registrant privileges including expulsion from all rugby-related activities	1 st offence – 30 days to 1 year
		2 nd offence – 2 years minimum
		3 rd or subsequent offence - 5 years minimum

For Harassment Case Review Panel Decisions, one or more sanctions may be applied for any proven offence.

Note 1 - For junior players, these standard entry point sanctions will typically be reduced by 50% due to the shorter playing season, but may be modified as deemed appropriate by the relevant Discipline Director or Judicial Officer.

Note 2 – Where any doubt exists as to the classification or length of a sanctioning, the relevant Discipline Director or Judicial Officer may refer to World Rugby Regulation 17 in making their determination.